THE Mennonite Quarterly Review

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NOTE: All the articles of this number, except the first and the last, were addresses given at the Amsterdam sessions of the Third Mennonite World Conference.

EDITORIAL

The Mennonite Quarterly Review Has Completed Ten Years of publication. With this issue it begins Volume XI. In celebration of having passed the tenth milestone, the editors take pleasure in presenting this special anniversary number, in connection with which they have slightly altered the appearance of the journal. They are fortunate to be able to make this anniversary number of unique value by presenting the historical addresses which were given on the occasion of the Third Mennonite World Conference held at Amsterdam, Netherlands, June 29 to July 3, 1936. The general theme of the conference was "Mennonites in History and in the Present" ("Die Mennoniten in Geschichte und Gegenwart"). Representative men were chosen to prepare addresses giving in brief survey the past history and present state of Mennonitism in the various lands of the world in which Mennonites are found today. These addresses thus constitute in small compass a unique and unusually valuable survey of World Mennonitism, past and present by men who are thoroughly familiar with the life of their native lands. Since the Third World Conference met in commemoration of the conversion of Menno Simons four hundred years ago, one of the chief addresses concerned "The Significance of Menno Simons for our Brotherhood." This address has also been included. To complete the picture of the Conference, two additional articles have been added, a brief account of the nature and course of the conference itself, and an interpretation by a Dutch Mennonite observer. In thus presenting a "World Conference Number" as the special anniversary number, the Review hopes to give its readers the privilege of looking in on World Mennonitism as it is, and as it is viewed by men who are familiar with its character and achievements. Each address reflects not only the personality of its author, but also his point of view. The impressions thus received will be greatly appreciated by those who are interested in informing themselves on the life and conditions of Mennonites in other lands. No responsibility is assumed for the contents of the addresses as they are here published, nor for the view of the authors.

The Editors do not Anticipate that Readers Will Conclude from the nature of this special number that the Review is promoting another world conference. Opinions will vary on the value of such meetings. Nevertheless it may be well to correct certain false impressions regarding the nature of the Third World Conference. Some have thought that its purpose was to bring about a theological or ecclesiastical unity of the various disparate Mennonite groups, although informed persons are well aware of the absurdity of any such attempt in view of the divergences between groups, particularly between the Mennonites of Holland and the rest of the Mennonite world. Others have thought that restrictions were placed on the foreign delegates who came to Holland for the conference, and that their Christian witness was hampered. It is scarcely necessary to state here that there is no truth to any of the above impressions, and that those who have been unnecessarily alarmed can be relieved of their fears. The Third World Conference was just what it was announced to be in advance, and just as it is reported to have been in the first article in this number of the Review. However, it is certainly true that if such international meetings fail to give a clear witness on the great issues involved in loyalty to Christ and His Word, then they can have no helpful place in our Mennonite life.

The Editors Wish to Thank the Conference Speakers for the Use of their addresses, which were not prepared directly for the Review. They also wish to thank those who have kindly permitted the use of photographic reproductions. In anticipation of an increased demand, additional copies of this number have been published. They will be available at the price of seventy-five cents postpaid.

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Review

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE THIRD MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE HELD AT AMSTERDAM, ELSPEET AND WITMARSUM, NETHERLANDS, June 29 to July 3, 1936

The 400th anniversary of Menno Simons' conversion and withdrawal from the Catholic Church in 1536 furnished the occasion for the Third Mennonite World Conference, held in Holland from June 29 to July 3, 1936, under the auspices of the Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit (General Mennonite Society), the official body of the Mennonite churches of Holland.

The first Mennonite World Conference had a similar occasion, namely, the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Mennonite Church in Switzerland in 1525. It was held at Basel and Zurich, Switzerland, in 1925, although the attendance was rather small. The second Mennonite World Conference, held in Danzig, 1930, had a somewhat different occasion, namely, the problem of bringing relief to the Mennonites of Russia and of providing aid for the refugee colonies which were just then being established in South America. It had a somewhat larger attendance and a fuller program. The third Mennonite World Conference, which followed after a six-year interval, had a larger attendance and a fuller program than either of the two preceding conferences. A rather full report may be of some interest to the readers of the REVIEW.

The 1930 conference in Danzig had asked Dr. Christian Neff of Weierhof, Germany, moderator of the South German Mennonite Conference, to make arrangements for the next conference. He approached the Dutch Mennonites, who agreed to sponsor the conference in connection with the 400th anniversary of the conversion of Menno Simons. A committee on arrangements was appointed by the Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit, which fixed the time and place of meeting, and worked out the program. The president of the A. D. S., Pastor van Drooge of Deventer, was the chairman of this committee, with Dr. Neff as chief counsellor for the Mennonites from other countries. Van Drooge also served as moderator of the World Conference, with Dr. Neff, who is now almost 75 years of age, as honorary moderator. A young Dutch pastor, Fritz Kuiper of Alkmaar, who may be known to some as one of the two Dutch Mennonite relief workers in Russia at the time of the great famine in 1921 and as son of the widely known and beloved Dr. A. K. Kuiper, formerly senior pastor of the Mennonite Church in Amsterdam, was executive manager of all conference arrangements and had much to do with the success of the conference. Pastor A. A. Sepp, of Zaandam, Secretary of the A. D. S., was official secretary of the conference. He conducted all the official correspondence in arranging the conference, and prepared condensed translations into Dutch and German of all the addresses of the conference.

At first, fears were expressed that the attendance at the conference from foreign countries would be very small, due to the disturbed condition of world affairs and the financial stringency in Germany. However, these fears proved to be ill-founded, for the conference had the largest and most representative attendance of any of the three world conferences held to date. Since the last half of the conference was to be held at the Dutch Mennonite conference grounds at Elspeet in Eastern Holland, where the capacity is limited to 350 guests, it became necessary to limit the attendance of Dutch Mennonites in view of the large attendance from Germany. Each Dutch congregation was allowed but two representatives, except the larger congregations such as the one at Amsterdam. The opening session at the Amsterdam church was attended by a large crowd of about 2,000 which filled the church, while the closing session in Witmarsum was attended by an equally large gathering which took part in the open-air ceremony at the Menno Simons Monument and

joined in the concluding worship service where the crowd was handled by using all four of the churches in the town. The official list of conference-participants, those who registered and paid the small conference fee of $4.50, was 343. Of this number 170 came from Holland; the remainder were distributed among foreign countries as follows: Germany, 145; Alsace, 8; U. S. A., 7; Canada, 3; Switzerland, 3; Java, 2; Liechtenstein, 2; Paraguay, 1; Poland, 1; China, 1. The representatives from China and Java were missionaries; and the one from Paraguay was a young Mennonite teacher studying in a German university. The two from Liechtenstein were the leader of the Hutterite Bruderhof there, and the widow of the former leader. Those attending from the United States were P. R. Schroeder of Freeman, South Dakota, President of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America; P. C. Hiebert, of Sterling, Kans., of the Mennonite Brethren Church; C. Henry Smith, of Bluffton, Ohio, of the Central Conference; Orie O. Miller, wife and daughter of Akron, Pa., and H. S. Bender of Goshen, Ind., of the (Old) Mennonite Church. Those attending from Canada were David Toews of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Moderator of the Conference of Mennonites of Canada; C. F. Klassen of Winnipeg, of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference; and a Mr. Hamm of Manitoba.

The conference was entirely unofficial in character, although numerous persons were delegated to attend by their conferences and were asked to bring back a report. No business was transacted by the meeting, although two resolutions were adopted in connection with the first session of the meeting at Elspeet which dealt with relief work. The entire conference was devoted to addresses on various subjects, largely historical, which were intended to make the Mennonites of the various countries acquainted with one another, with their history and present conditions. From this point of view the meeting was particularly valuable to the American visitors at the conference who had a splendid opportunity to become acquainted with conditions among the Mennonites of Europe, as well as to meet personally a very large number of representative Mennonite leaders from Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Alsace.

Since the conference was in no way official it could not make plans for another world conference in the future. However, the

steering committee of the conference, composed of the four moderators for the various sessions together with a few others, indicated the hope that another similar meeting might be held in connection with some suitable occasion in five or six years, and together with this hope expressed the desire that it might be held in America. A large number of Dutch and other European Mennonite leaders expressed a desire to attend the conference if it should be held in America.

The program of the week's meetings was so planned as to provide for sessions at three different places. The opening service Monday evening, as well as the sessions on Tuesday all day and Wednesday morning, were held in the large meeting-house of the Amsterdam Mennonite Church, called the "Singel Kerk," which is located in the heart of the city. This part of the conference was devoted to a series of survey and historical addresses on the general theme: *The Mennonites in Past and Present* (Die Mennoniten in Geschichte und Gegenwart). The opening session Monday evening was devoted to a worship service, with a sermon by Dr. A. K. Kuiper, former senior pastor of the Amsterdam Mennonite Church, the most widely known Mennonite preacher of Holland. He chose as his text, I Cor. 3:11, Menno Simons' motto, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The remainder of the Amsterdam program was as follows: (1) *The Significance of Menno Simons' Work for our Brotherhood,* Pastor N. van der Zijpp, Joure, Holland; (2) *The Mennonites of Holland, Past and Present,* Pastor J. Ijntema, Leeuwarden, Holland; (3) *The Mennonites of Germany, Past and Present,* Dr. Christian Neff, Weierhof, Germany; (4) *The Mennonites of Switzerland and France, Past and Present,* Samuel Geiser, Orange, Tavannes, Switzerland; (5) *The Mennonites of Russia, Past and Present,* Benj. H. Unruh, Karlsruhe, Germany; (6) *The Mennonites of the U. S. A., Past and Present,* H. S. Bender, Goshen, Indiana; (7) *The Mennonites of Canada, Past and Present,* David Toews, Rosthern, Saskatchewan; (8) *The Mennonites of Brazil and Paraguay.* On the last topic brief reports were read which had been sent from the two colonies, and brief oral reports were given by B. H. Unruh and Fritz Kliewer, the latter a student from Paraguay now studying in Germany. On Wednesday evening a lecture was given by Pastor

F. Dijkema of Amsterdam, showing a number of pictures of Mennonite life from various parts of the world.

After the close of the Wednesday morning session in Amsterdam, the entire group was taken on a very interesting trip through the canals and harbor of Amsterdam in ten large motorboats. After this the entire company traveled by chartered steamer across the Zuiderzee to Harderwijk, where they were taken by bus to Elspeet, a conference retreat in the beautiful moor country of eastern Holland not far from Deventer.

The program in Elspeet ran from Wednesday evening until Friday noon as follows: (1) *The Mennonite Church and Her Youth,* Pastor Erich Göttner, Danzig, Germany, and P. R. Schroeder, Freeman, South Dakota; (2) *Mennonite Missions,* Pastor C. Nijdam, Holland, President of the Dutch Mennonite Mission Board, and Orie O. Miller, Akron, Pennsylvania; (3) *Mennonite Relief Work,* Pastor S. H. N. Gorter, Rotterdam, Holland, Chairman of the Dutch Mennonite Relief Committee (Hollandsch Doopsgezind Emigranten Bureau), Bishop David Toews, Rosthern, Saskatchewan, Chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, and P. C. Hiebert, Sterling, Kansas, Chairman of the Mennonite Central Committee; (4) *Sermon,* Jacob Kroeker, Wernigerode, Germany, Director of the Missionary Society, "Licht Dem Osten." Time was given for a very interesting open discussion following each address.

Friday noon the entire company traveled about 100 miles by bus to Witmarsum in East Friesland, stopping on the way for the noon meal at Heeringveen. Witmarsum is historic as the birthplace of Menno Simons, and as the place where he first began to preach the Gospel, also where he experienced the conversion which took him out of the Catholic Church into the ranks of our own brotherhood. The meeting in Witmarsum was therefore in a sense a pilgrimage to a historic shrine of the Mennonite Church. Some years ago a monument was erected on the site of the old Mennonite meetinghouse in the fields near the town of Witmarsum. In the open field around this monument to Menno Simons a large crowd gathered, at least 1,500, most of whom were Frisian Mennonites. The president of the A. D. S., and a representative of the Frisian Mennonite Society, each made short addresses paying tributes to Menno Simons and laying wreaths at the base of the Menno Simons Monu-

ment. Benjamin H. Unruh spoke briefly on behalf of the Mennonites from other lands. A chorus of Frisian Mennonite young people sang a song, their "Bondslied." Immediately after this the entire company proceeded to the town of Witmarsum for the closing service of the conference, which was a worship service with a sermon by Pastor van Drooge. The text used was Lamentations 5:21, "Renew our days as of old." The crowd was so large that it had to be divided among the four churches of the city and the sermon transmitted by loud speaker. The sermon was preached in the Reformed Church, formerly the Catholic Church in Reformation times, probably the church in which Menno Simons preached as a Catholic priest. The service was broadcast over a national network. At the conclusion of this impressive service, brief farewells were spoken by Christian Neff and P. R. Schroeder.

The entire conference was very well organized, and the addresses were very interesting and worth while. The Dutch speakers spoke in Dutch, while all the other addresses were in German. However, each morning mimeographed sheets were handed out containing translations of the addresses in brief, so that those who could not understand one language had a translation of the address in their own language. The addresses in Amsterdam were factual, while those in Elspeet discussed themes of present-day interest. Provision was therefore made for a brief discussion after each of the subjects in Elspeet. The spirit throughout the meetings was splendid. There was a general expression of gratitude for the way in which the entire conference was organized and conducted and the spirit which was manifested throughout. Where occasional differences became evident, as was to be expected, mutual respect was manifested. The larger and more fundamental questions of doctrine and practice on which there are wide divergences among the European Mennonites were not made a part of the program.

One very commendable feature of the conference was the way in which the foreign guests were provided for. During that portion of the conference which was held in Amsterdam the homes of the Amsterdam Mennonites were opened in a very generous way to the guests from a distance. Lodging and breakfast were provided in the homes. Noon and evening meals were provided in a large dining hall at the Central Y. M. C. A. in Amsterdam. In Elspeet all meals and lodging were provided free on the conference grounds in

the very simple but very adequate and comfortable cottages and buildings belonging to the Gemeentedagbewegung (Conference Movement). The sessions of the conference in Elspeet were held in a simple church building on the grounds which seats about 350.

Another special feature of the conference was an interesting exhibit of old books and documents relating to Menno Simons and early Mennonite history. The exhibit was composed entirely of material from the noted library of the Amsterdam Mennonite Church and was on display in the reading room of the library adjoining the church building.

Some may ask the question as to the value of such an international Mennonite gathering. One should not expect too much from such a meeting, but without doubt the limited objectives of the conference were attained; namely, to provide an opportunity for mutual and fruitful contact between the Mennonites of various lands, in the course of which helpful information might be disseminated which would lead to a better understanding of the faith, life and work of various groups; and to emphasize the common historical heritage which has been handed down from our Mennonite forefathers, in this case particularly through Menno Simons. Nothing further was attempted by this Third Mennonite World Conference. No doubt a by-product was at least a partial insight into the sources of weakness and strength in the various groups and some conception of the difficulties which must be overcome before any closer working together is possible. What a marvelous and blessed thing it would be to have a united world Mennonitism, united in faith and practice and work. Such a unity would without doubt strengthen the Mennonite Church everywhere, particularly in the regions where it is at present threatened with decline and decay. Some pessimistic notes were struck along this line at the conference. Those of us who hold to a full-Gospel faith cannot help but be grieved to know that there are sections of world Mennonitism where the simple Bible faith of our forefathers has been abandoned, and also where the principles of peace and nonresistance are no longer cherished. We rejoice at every sign of a spiritual awakening and revival of gospel principles, such as is developing to some extent in Holland today. An encouraging aspect of this third Mennonite World Conference was on the one hand the frank admission by several Dutch speakers that the barren rationalistic liberalism

of the recent past has been unfruitful and cannot meet our spiritual need, and on the other hand the clear and warm evangelical note that was heard in most of the addresses, and the evidence that by far the greatest part of world Mennonitism still desires to hold fast to the simple gospel faith and life that has been our precious heritage as Mennonites these four hundred years, and to press forward in an active propagation of the same. Those who hold this faith will scarcely be willing to compromise or surrender that which is most precious to them as believers for the sake of any superficial union with such as have abandoned this faith, happy as they would be to welcome a restoration of the real unity of the church for which Christ prayed so earnestly in His great high priestly prayer in John 17.

In connection with the World Conference two other meetings were held which were also of considerable importance. One was a meeting of relief committees, and the other a meeting in the interests of our Mennonite peace testimony. A brief report of these two meetings will be in order.

On Monday, June 29, representatives of the various relief committees of Holland, Germany, Canada, the U. S. A., as well as representatives from Switzerland and Alsace, met in Amsterdam, for an exchange of information on the present activities and problems of the various committees, and a consideration of ways and means whereby the work might be strengthened. Pastor S. H. N. Gorter of Rotterdam, chairman of the Dutch Mennonite relief organization, served as chairman of the gathering. Three further meetings were held during the following days. Hitherto the unofficial headquarters for our relief work had been the office of Benj. H. Unruh at Karlsruhe, Germany. It was decided to make this office the official headquarters hereafter with the name *Central Bureau for Mennonite Relief.* Each relief committee will conduct its own work as heretofore, but Professor Unruh will now be able to serve more effectively as the central bureau where information is collected and where various important activities center, such as contact with the German government, the sending of packages to Russia, and assistance to the refugee colonies in Brazil and Paraguay.

On Saturday, July 4, a small group of representatives of various Mennonite peace committees chiefly of Holland and North America, together with several other interested persons, a total of

about twenty-five, met in the quiet retreat grounds of the Dutch Mennonites near Steenwijk in Eastern Holland, known as "Fredeshiem," "house of peace." It was hoped that closer contact between the Mennonites of various lands who still stand for the Biblical principles of peace and nonresistance might contribute to a strengthening of our peace testimony. At this meeting a peace manifesto was endorsed, and steps were taken to organize an International Mennonite Peace Committee whose chief service will be to aid in bringing help to Mennonites who have to suffer for refusal to do military service. It was encouraging to find a unanimous stand by those present on the principle of absolute Gospel nonresistance and peace.

Resolutions adopted at the Third Mennonite World Conference, Elspeet, Holland, July 2, 1936

I

The representatives of the Mennonite Brotherhood from various lands assembled in the Mennonite World Congress at Amsterdam, Elspeet, and Witmarsum, Netherlands, June 29 to July 3, 1936, do adopt the following resolution:

We remember with gratitude the valuable contribution which our Mennonite churches in Russia have made to our Mennonite life and work in the past particularly in the work of foreign missions. We deeply regret the absence of our Russian brethren at this congress and pray the rich blessing of Almighty God upon their congregations. We hope that in view of the changing conditions in the world at the present time it may soon be possible to renew the bond of fellowship which was formerly so close between us and which was made stronger by the relief work at the time of the great famine 1920-1922.

God grant that our Russian brethren may soon resume their place in our Brotherhood and join with us in fulfilling the great tasks which face us at the present time.

In this hope we send our brethren in Russia a hearty greeting of love in Christ Jesus.

II

The Third Mennonite World Conference greets the immigrant brethren in Canada, the United States, Brazil and Paraguay. The Conference thanks God with them that He opened doors for them and prepared organizations which made possible their migration across the ocean and their settlement in the New World.

The Conference thanks all the brethren and sisters who with God's help by faithfulness, industry, and thrift have paid their debts. The heavenly Father will not leave them unrewarded for their faithfulness.

The Conference hopes that economic conditions will improve and therefore appeals urgently to all who have not yet paid their debts, to be fully conscious of the seriousness of their responsibility toward God, toward our brotherhood, toward our past, and last but not least, toward their creditors, and to discharge faithfully their obligations, and to remember that God will help those who endeavor honorably to do their duty.

Other Messages

The following cablegrams were sent by the Conference during the sessions in Amsterdam:

1. To the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Rosthern, Sask. "The World Conference sends to the Board, the immigrants and the churches in Canada and the United States, greetings, good wishes, and hearty thanks for all their labors and sacrifice."

2. To Peter Klassen, Witmarsum, Hansa Hammonia, Santa Catharina, Brazil. "The World Conference sends hearty greetings to all colonists, and wishes them further God's help and blessing."

3. To Jacob Siemens, Colonia Fernheim, Chaco, Paraguay. "World Conference thanks you and the Mennonite Central Committee for the great work of colonization and prays God's further help in the conquest of all difficulties."

The following message was sent to Her Majesty, the Queen of the Netherlands. "The General Conference of Mennonites, with representatives present from Europe and America and foreign mission stations, sends to Her Majesty reverential greetings and wishes God's blessings."

As we close this brief report, we are not unmindful of the fact that much more could be said about many interesting aspects and events of the World Conference, but space prohibited a more lengthy report. We are also aware that it might have been possible to spend some time to discuss the points of difference between European and American Mennonites, and to point out what would be necessary for a more solid and permanent approach between our groups on opposite sides of the ocean, but this can better be done in a separate article. In conclusion, we wish to express our thanks for the many kindnesses shown to us on the occasion of our visit in Holland and Germany, especially in connection with the World Conference. It is sometimes said that the Dutch Mennonites are on the whole cold and inhospitable to strangers, but we can testify that this was not the case, for we experienced much real Christian love and Christian hospitality at the hands of our hosts and our friends in Holland in general, which was warm and sincere, and for which we here wish to express our heartfelt thanks. It is our hope and prayer that some seed may have been sown and some good done at this Third Mennonite World Conference which will bear fruit in the coming years to the glory of God and the furtherance of His Kingdom.

Orie O. Miller, Akron, Pennsylvania.
Harold S. Bender, Goshen, Indiana.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MENNO SIMONS FOR OUR BROTHERHOOD*

N. VAN DER ZIJPP
Joure, Netherlands

We have gathered here from various countries of the world to commemorate with gratitude Menno Simons' conversion from popery. At such a time the question of the significance of the work of Menno Simons for our brotherhood is in order.

The first question to be asked is whether we still recognize a bond with our past, whether we still consider ourselves to be a brotherhood of followers of Menno Simons. It might seem at first thought that this question would have to be answered in the negative. Much that was associated with Menno Simons in both the inner and the outer aspects of his life seems strange to us today; many of his views and principles, may I mention only his view of the ban, are no longer ours; and on many life-issues our attitude today is different from his. Thus in a sense we are certainly far removed from Menno, perhaps also in part because we do not know him. His life and his religious views are no longer well-known among present-day Dutch Mennonites. This is true not only because there is no interest in Menno Simons, but also because it is quite difficult to secure information about him. The last edition of Menno's works in the Dutch language appeared in 1681; and about Menno himself very little is being written today.

But there is another reason, other than that Menno is not well known among us, why the influence of Menno Simons is less today than for instance that of Calvin upon his followers. It is the commendable feeling that we do not today, any more than centuries ago, want to be first of all disciples of Menno, but rather disciples of Christ. It was this feeling which led the Waterlander Anabaptists of the middle of the sixteenth century to prefer the name "Doopsgezinde" to the designation "Mennonite." We should also remember that Menno himself warned against honoring his own

* The author has slightly revised and condensed for the REVIEW his original address as given in Amsterdam.

person. When he heard the report: "Alas, alas, the people are looking too much to Menno," he sighed: "When I learn that the people look to me and depend on me so much, I could almost wish that the Lord would let me fall once, without removing his grace altogether from me, in order that they might learn not to trust in me nor in any other flesh, but to set their ground, hope, and trust alone in the living cornerstone, Jesus Christ."

These words of Menno himself point the way to us for a proper commemoration of his person and of his conversion. As we look back to the past with eyes of gratitude, we gradually see the form of the devoted, struggling man who was Menno Simons, fading away to give place to the wonderful light of the grace of God. After all we have come together here not to thank Menno Simons, but through him to bring thanks to our God, of whom, through whom, and to whom all things exist.

The significance of the person and work (for these two cannot be separated) of Menno Simons for our brotherhood is limited by four factors.

1. Menno Simons was not the founder of our brotherhood, for he gave his adherence to it after it had already existed for several years. In the land of its origin, in Switzerland, our brotherhood had already garnered rich fruits of the new life; in Moravia the movement had swollen into a great stream; in South and Middle Germany, out of a multitude of watchwords and ideas, a Biblical Christianity had arisen which was united in its adherence to the principle of baptism on confession of faith. In many places there were large groups of brethren. In the Netherlands also, where the movement against the Catholic conception of the sacraments had prepared the soil for the evangelical faith, the seed of the new movement had begun to show signs of a promising growth. Unfortunately the developments in Münster had made many weak in faith, and had finally swept a considerable number away. In the regions where this had occurred, a powerful persecution set in which often made no distinction between the revolutionary and the peaceful Anabaptists. It was just at this juncture that Menno Simons left the security of his priestly parsonage and took upon himself the heavy cross of his Lord, to suffer with the church of the Lord, to pray with her, to go from place to place and country to country and to suffer. And this he did, not as the leader and lord of the church,

but as one out of her midst who served. And even later when his influence had become greater, he still remained the servant of the church, who spoke to her and for her. This was his own estimate of himself, and it was also the estimate held by the church.

2. Menno's significance is further limited by the fact that he did not leave behind him a systematic theological structure as the other reformers did.* His ideal was the apostolic church, and in his writings, especially in the earliest ones, he endeavored to strengthen his followers on the already established foundation of faith. His writings are therefore chiefly of a devotional character. For this reason Menno must be considered as more of a shepherd of souls than as a dogmatician; hence his words were more a source of strength for the individual believer than the source of a theological construction which dominated the thought of the entire movement.

3. Another limiting factor to be taken into account is the fact that Menno had to do with people who were strongly individualistic, both because of their Friesian nature and because of their conception of the Bible, whereby a submission to any binding human authority was impossible.

4. Finally, there is the fact that Menno's personality was possessed of certain characteristics which hindered him from becoming the universally recognized leader, the "head of the church." I refer, for example, to his lack of energetic and thoroughgoing action which led to too much hesitation in critical moments. It was inevitable on this account that his influence with his followers remained limited.

All of this however does not justify the conclusion that Menno's influence on our brotherhood was slight or insignificant. On the contrary, Menno's work was of the greatest significance. First of all, he was the man who assured the continuance of the brotherhood in his time. One need only to think of the cruciality of the moment when Menno joined the brotherhood. Münster had fallen and the revolutionary power of Jan van Leyden had been destroyed, but his following was still large and constituted a real danger. The consequent persecution also led to a great strain among the people who were interested in Anabaptism, for many were asking whether

* Nevertheless Menno was not so incompetent in theology as has sometimes been supposed. For a good account of Menno's theology see *Menno Simons*, by Dr. Cornelius Krahn, Karlsruhe, 1936.

The Group in Attendance at the Mennonite World Conference Taken on the Grounds of the Elspeet Brotherhood House, Elspeet, Netherlands, July 3, 1936

God was not calling them to the establishment of His kingdom by force. And many others were tormented by disquieting and confusing doubts. Then Menno Simons spoke up, and the sound of his trumpet was no uncertain one. The use of violence was rejected. "Our fortress is Christ, our defense is patience, and our sword is the Word of God," says Menno. With such teaching he gave the wavering and hesitating brethren a firm ground under their feet. Thus it was he who completed the final separation between the revolutionary and the peaceful Anabaptists. If Menno had not been so dauntless and brave in his leadership of the peaceful wing which conceived of the kingdom of God as a spiritual reality, very probably the Anabaptist movement in Holland and North Germany would have disappeared in the catastrophe of the revolutionary wing.

We are therefore justified in concluding with gratitude that Menno Simons saved and preserved the brotherhood.

Menno did this a second time when Obbe Philips, the first leader, turned apostate in 1540. Disappointed and discouraged, Obbe withdrew from the movement; everything became uncertain. In this critical moment Menno dared to step into the empty place of leadership. Willingly and gladly he took upon his weak shoulders the heavy burden of responsibility as well as the danger of the constantly more threatening persecution, for the love of Christ constrained him when he saw the many sheep without a shepherd.

A third time Menno Simons preserved the brotherhood. This was in the conflict with David Joris and his followers. The spiritual welfare of the brotherhood was again in danger, for David Joris, a very influential leader, held that the sharp separation from the world, which had led to much suffering and shedding of blood and loss of life, was unnecessary, since nothing had been achieved thereby. According to his view it was better "to dissimulate with the world" until the time of the judgment. After all the outward expression was only a form, whereas the inner life was what really counted. One could, for instance, be at ease in attending the Catholic church, if only the soul (the bride of Christ) should keep itself pure until the coming of the bridegroom. Many sympathized with this comfortable theory, in the application of which Joris proved himself to be a master. The number of secret disciples of Joris was very great. Menno, with his upright intuition, felt in his heart that this road of hypocritical piety must ultimately lead to the depths of

the slough of sin. With unshakable courage and clear vision he opposed this unworthy attitude with the Lord's own requirement of self-denial and bearing the cross, and he himself led out in this difficult road. Here also we can with gratitude speak of the rescue of the brotherhood. What would have remained anyway if the doctrine of David Joris had won out?

Over against these two great dangers which threatened the brotherhood from within through its revolutionary and fanatical wing, Menno guaranteed the continuance of the brotherhood. And as he had found his support and strength in the beginning against the Catholic church and later against Calvinism, in the express word of God, in the "express command of Christ," so it was in this case. Menno proclaimed: "I am no Enoch and no Elijah, no seer or prophet, who can teach or proclaim anything else than the express and literally written word of God as it is rightly understood in the spirit. Everyone who teaches anything different, will soon step aside from the true way. I have also no visions or vain imaginations from angels, which I also do not desire, in order that I should not be deceived by such fantasies and devil's deceptions." In the clear Word of God Menno possessed everything that the soul needs for time and eternity. This principle was the solid foundation of his life. With it he turned against the learned men of his time, whom he rejected, not because of their learning, but because they trusted more in their learning than in God. With this principle he also was able to stand against the mighty ones and the authorities, whom he challenged to practice righteousness, and whom he called to repentance, for they likewise fall under the condemnation of God. "Confess, O ye tyrants and men of blood, that the emperor is not the head of Christ, but Christ is the head of the emperor, that not the emperor will reign, but Christ will reign over the emperor."

The principle of the unlimited authority of God's word enabled Menno to bear courageously suffering, disappointment and loneliness, just as it also gave him the strength to reprove and to punish unrighteousness and an evil life.

The fundamental principle of the Reformation, "The scripture alone" (sola Scriptura), which was much more consistently applied by Menno than by Luther, delivered Menno from all bondage to human authorities, no matter how much they professed to have the right to rule over the soul. For this reason Menno recog-

nized no creed as a binding authority equal to or above the scripture. He did accept and use the so-called Apostle's Creed which was recognized by the reformers as having authority in doctrine, but he recognized it only as an approximation of faith and not as a rigid authority. In this respect Menno exerted a helpful influence on our brotherhood.

It is noteworthy, that Menno expressly speaks of the "plain command of Christ," (der platt ausgedrückte Befehl Christi). Upon the basis of this principle Menno made a clear discrimination between the Old and the New Testament; the teachings of the New Testament are to be given authority above those of the Old Testament. This discrimination comes out particularly in the use of force by the Christian. ". . . To use the sword is forbidden by Christ for all believing Christians, for the New Testament says that we should suffer patiently and should not fight and strive with swords and guns." According to Menno the Old Testament was binding on the Jews, but for us it has been superseded by the New Testament. The Old still has value, but this value is dependent on the New Testament. It is to be expected that the Calvinistic opponents of Menno should seize on this point to accuse Menno of being unorthodox. It is also easy to see that Menno's views of the Scripture opened new paths for his followers.

When we consider the theological significance of Menno's work, we find that we cannot assert that he manifested a prophetic consciousness which set up outstanding standards (Richtlinien) for his own time and for the future. He was too much oriented in the past to do this. Theologically his great service to our brotherhood consisted of the fact that he demanded of himself and of his followers an unconditional obedience to the word of God together with a consistent application of the gospel requirements to actual life.

Because of his conception of the Gospel as a "new law" (Nova lex) Menno does not altogether escape the danger of the position which holds that piety is fulfilled by the observance of commands and prohibitions. With great scrupulosity Menno observes the letter of the Scripture and thus falls into the danger of subordinating into second place the very center of Christianity which is the grace of God, and which is the only thing which makes the Gospel a gospel at all, namely, good news. Now and then, especially in his later

writings, Menno is inclined to emphasize morality at the expense of spirituality.

What has just been said becomes still more striking when Menno's statements about faith are compared to those of Luther. For Luther, faith was primarily God meeting man, God touching and penetrating human nature with the Holy Spirit whereby man is justified by God. Luther's concern is to show that this occurs without human aid. When Luther speaks about faith he sees a ladder let down from heaven to earth, whereas Menno sees the ladder set up from earth to heaven. We dare not say that Menno does not see the descent from heaven to earth at all. On the contrary Menno also begins with the grace of God. The undertone of all his preaching is after all the great need of the sinner and the riches of redemption in Christ; that is the foundation for him. Menno speaks movingly of the great love which God has manifested toward us. Further proof that Menno's conception of grace is not a secondary point in his theological views, is seen in the fact that he held a particular teaching of the incarnation of Christ in which the deity of Christ is emphasized with unusual vigor. This is done quite clearly with the purpose of emphatically stressing the gracious redemption of God. However it should not be forgotten that theological conceptions remain in the background in Menno's writings, for he does not consider knowledge (Erkenntnis) in these matters to be necessary for salvation. For this reason also Menno does not concern himself so much with the operations of the Holy Spirit as with the fruits of the Spirit. He is not concerned about hair-splitting theories regarding the "how" and the "why" of the method by which Jesus Christ, as redeemer, brings us God's gift of salvation, but is rather concerned about whether we are ready to accept it and to follow the path of obedience. God gives us salvation; He is the one who regenerates us; but we must bear fruits "meet for repentance." Our activity, therefore, has a decisive part to play in the process of salvation. In this respect Menno is sharply different from Luther, but on the other hand also from the Catholic church. We can never earn salvation. The Bible, which Menno at first did not dare to open lest he be misled, finally brought him to the firm conviction that neither Church nor priest, sacrament nor sacrifice, can decide, influence, or compel God to give us salvation. There is no salvation apart from faith in Jesus Christ. God completed redemption and

man has the privilege of warming himself in the sunshine of His grace. In this sunshine man can grow in his own soul, and can build the kingdom of God. Indeed sin is great, even in one's own heart, and the wrath of God rests heavily on the godless, but—and here is where Menno's emphasis differs from that of Calvin, the essence of sin *has* been broken. "Be of good cheer, I *have* overcome the world." Darkness reigns now, but the eternal light is already beginning to shine. While Calvin sees first of all the darkness, struggles with it, and goes his way burdened under the load of sin and the wrath of God, Menno sees the joyful light of the redemption of God. The background of his piety is thankfulness that God has redeemed, but particularly that God has redeemed him. Therefore, he is of good courage and cannot remain in the valley of the shadow of death. That glorious secret of those martyrs who fill the pages of our martyr books is also his secret, even though he did not need to empty the cup of suffering to the dregs. Menno also learned to know the redemption of God which makes possible a life in the light even though it may at times lead through darkest night.

This joyousness of faith in Menno is no superficiality, nor a closing of the eyes to reality. Neither is it ignorance of the world around about him,—how well he could characterize this world in its avarice and meanness. Neither is this joyousness a passive sitting and waiting, for nothing is farther from Menno than passivity. Consider for instance the principle of non-resistance, which on the surface appears to be a most passive principle, but actually is active love at work.

The joyous tone in Menno's life leads him to ask a question in his sober Friesian manner in regard to his redemption: "What is now required of me?" And the answer comes from the Scripture: "Not to say Lord, Lord, but to do the will of the Father."

Along with his conception of faith, which he considered to be an inner dynamic, a gift of God's grace which could not be formulated in words, he combined the requirement of righteousness as the unconditional fruit of faith. He added to the passive conception of the new birth, the active conception of building the kingdom of God. Menno charges the Lutherans and the Calvinists with failing to manifest the fruits of faith; moral improvement, love of one's neighbor, and mercy, were not evident among them. Consequently he concluded from the Scripture that the tree could not be good if

it did not bear fruit. He constantly admonished his followers that it must be different among them, and he constantly spurred them on to brotherly attitudes, to an open confession of God, and to a bearing of the cross if the Lord demanded it.

By his requirement of fruit-bearing faith, Menno emphasized strongly the indivisibility of faith and life, and thereby created a type of piety which has remained a characteristic of our brotherhood to this day. Thus the practical piety of a leader who endeavored to maintain the balance and organic unity of life and teaching, has given our brotherhood an unmistakable and ineradicable stamp.

This independent type of piety was capable of further development in various directions and admitted modification, since it was not cast into the strict form of a finished and closed system of theology. It was capable of evolution from within, as well as influence from without. Dogmatic Calvinism exerted its influence upon it, although we must insist on the other hand that Menno's leaven also influenced Dutch Calvinism as well as the spirit of the Dutch people in general.

Menno's heritage has often been neglected. The holy life which his principles required often became fossilized and empty, suffocated in dead forms and narrow party strife. Pietism as well as rationalism had its influence on the further development. Pietistic movements have nourished a type of religious individualism among us which seeks only after one's own salvation and in the process forgets the obligation which Jesus laid upon us to be a good Samaritan. On the other hand rationalistic influence among us has often placed the entire emphasis on the fruit of faith, while the faith itself was allowed to wither away. We Dutch Mennonites have had the reputation of being practical Christians, and it is true that our little brotherhood has often achieved great works of sacrifice and social service. But this frequently has had its source more in the practical philosophy of a moralistic humanism than in a deep-rooted Christianity. The danger which we observed already in Menno's time, namely that religion should give way to mere morals, has wrought grievous damage in our brotherhood.

Thus it is clear that the type of piety which Menno left as his heritage to his followers has developed in many variations. The children of the one and the same family have developed differently as they have grown to maturity. This has now and then given occa-

sion to conflicts, and is still today the cause of unavoidable troubles. We have not been able to maintain our freedom and at the same time to keep a good balance of life and teaching. For this reason differences of opinion and strife of various kinds have arisen in the past, and still arise among us.

Nevertheless we are conscious of unity, even when we find it difficult to define the unity. We Dutch Mennonites feel ourselves one, but we also feel ourselves a part of world Mennonitism. No external ecclesiastical organization binds us. No compulsory creed, which unites by binding dogmas and excludes that which is not in accord with it, creates this unity, for there are many points, especially just now, which divide us.

Nevertheless a certain unity exists. We are united by our common spiritual experience through four centuries, by a common suffering through four centuries, and by the labors of love and mercy which we have manifested toward each other in the course of four centuries. We are one like children of a family. Our rich historical past unites us; but we believe not only in a past unity but also in a future unity, for it is after all "our Father" who calls us.

The future is not without its connection with the past. Even when we face reality and recognize that times have changed and are changing and that we change with them, and even when we see clearly that not all of Menno's ways can be our ways, nevertheless we are compelled again and again to go back to Menno (and I believe this will be still more true in the future), to inquire after the significance of his work and of the type of piety which he created, for there we will find values which are of great blessing for us and our time.

May I therefore close with the wish that a new edition of Menno's works may be published, particularly of his "Fundamentbuch" and several other of his earlier writings, in order that we may have a better knowledge of our reformer and a greater familiarity with his work.

THE MENNONITES OF THE NETHERLANDS

J. IJNTEMA

Haarlem, Netherlands

Our congregations arose at the time of the Reformation as the result of a far-flung movement which was not interested in a reformation of the Church so much as a radical break with the existing Church. For the Church had turned Christianity into a worldly thing. As Tröltsch and Heiler have pointed out, the Anabaptists, in contrast to the state church Christianity of the Roman Catholic church and the protestant churches, promoted a Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount, or perhaps more correctly, a Christianity of the kingdom of God. Our Anabaptist forefathers held that the Church had made too many concessions to the world. As children of God they wanted to be different from the children of the world.

In the world and in the worldly church each one desired to lord it over the other, but among our forefathers it was not so to be (Matthew 20:26). They were brethren with one another, sharers of the covenant, and one was no higher than another. The world needed a government clothed with authority, but the children of God sought to separate themselves from it. They would not accept an office in the government, would exercise no governmental authority, would bear no weapons, would swear no oath, would not practice lies and deception, nor would they let themselves be led astray into the use of tricks and artifices. They could never forget the teaching of the Gospel which says "the truth will make you free." Their "Yea" should be "Yea" and their "Nay" should be "Nay".

Our forefathers wanted to serve God in a church (Gemeinde) on which the world should have no influence. This required a strict separation from the world. "In the world but not of the world" was their motto. Mixed marriages were strictly avoided. This group, which was mocked and scoffed at by the world and was not tolerated, whose meetinghouses had to be built apart or which were hidden away in out of the way places, constituted a completely sep-

arated body, an oasis of piety with the full practice of the service of love in the desert of the world, an "ark of safety" on the stormy waves of the world ocean. They desired nothing more fervently than to be left alone by the world in peace and quiet.

This peace was not granted to them. The world hated them bitterly, and persecuted them cruelly. The government allowed itself to be led into unmerciful and brutal measures against these nonresistant "victims" of Christ. The history of the Mennonites in the Netherlands as in the other European countries, begins with a period of blood and tears. Endless blood was shed for the dream of the kingdom of God. In the course of the whole period of persecution (1531 to 1597) fifteen hundred martyrs died for their faith in the Netherlands.*

We who have come together here out of various regions of the world will no doubt feel our unity in the uplifting thought that we all have a share in the same glorious and inspiring past.

With great reverence and thankfulness we think of the willingness to suffer which characterized our forefathers, who according to Menno's own words "for the testimony of God and their conscience were cast out of their houses and lands, were betrayed, harassed, and disgraced, were hanged on the gallows, were tortured with inhuman cruelty, were strangled with cords at the post, were cast into slimy mud holes," and all for no other reason than that they, after God had put it into their hearts, desired to be obedient in their own way to the Lord of the Church, and were found steadfast in this service in tribulation and persecution, and were faithful unto death when it had to be so.

Even in later times, when here in this country, thanks be to God, the pyres no longer smoked and the sword of persecution had been put into its sheath again, the Anabaptists were still constantly oppressed by a world which simply did not want to tolerate them. The oppression came from the Calvinistic as well as the Roman Catholic side. For instance in the middle of the eighteenth Century preacher Johannes Stinstra of Harlingen was deprived of his pulpit for fifteen years under the pressure of the Reformed authorities.

Bloodily persecuted for the sake of the kingdom of God, then later tolerated, but still constantly harassed by a world with which one would have preferred to have as little to do as possible—that

* Kühler, *Geschichte der niederländischen Taufgesinnten im* 16. *Jahrhundert*, p. 270.

is one side of the picture of our early history, one side of the dream of the kingdom of God. But what about the other side? The other side is the story of strife, of bitter, sometimes poisonous and most regrettable disunity, which was the result of the attempt to safeguard the church by means of the ban and "shunning", so that it should remain "a true Church of Christ," a "church without spot or wrinkle."—Endless division, that is the other side of the story. The divisions did not stop with the three chief groups, Waterlander, Frisian, and Flemish. A multitude of other parties appeared; old and young Flemings, old and young, hard and soft, or lax Frisians; the Thys Gerrits and Lubbert Gerrits people, the Pieter Jeltjes people, the Jan Jakobs people, Dirksen, Jan Claesen, Uko Wallists, the House-buyers and Anti-House-buyers. As one might infer from the names, the strife often concerned personal opinions and insignificant distinctions. Yet the strife was carried on with great passion in spite of all the pettiness of method and program, for the purpose was a high principle, a value of great worth, namely, the purity of the church.

Is it not an irony of history that the liquidation of the first period of strife, the sincere desire for a re-union, should have sown the seed for a new division and for further disunity. The peace proposals (the "Olive Branch," etc.), which were the basis for the brethren to draw nearer together, were confessions of faith. When they were first proposed, no one thought of making these formulae of union a binding authority. Yet in the second half of the seventeenth century attempts were made to do this very thing. The outcome of these attempts was the so-called Lammerenkryg, (Lammeren war), the battle for a confession of faith, which was to divide Menno's people in the Netherlands once again into two bitterly warring camps, the Zonists, and the Lammists. (The Mennonite Church in which the sessions of the Amsterdam portion of this Congress are being held was the church of the Lammist party). Thus a new division occurred, and once more, after years of strife accompanied by showers of pamphlets had passed, when finally after a long time the "warring brethren" were exhausted by the conflict, the reconciliation and reunion came, a reunion which many a Dutch Mennonite congregation witnesses to at the present day in its name "United Mennonite Congregation".

Necessity teaches prayer. Necessity also teaches unity and cooperation. The necessity does not always need to be one's own distress; it can also be the distress of others which leads to such favorable consequences. And in this reconciliation, it was indeed the need of the brethren in foreign countries, the need of the persecuted Swiss Mennonites, which was of the greatest influence in bringing about peace and harmony in the divided congregations. Allow me to give a few figures. In the year 1672 (the "anxious" year) 15,466 guilders were contributed for the Swiss brethren by the two Amsterdam churches "Tor" and "Lam". In 1690 the "Zon" and "Lam" congregations contributed 5,600 guilders for the brethren in the Palatinate. In 1713 the sum of 50,000 guilders was collected from the entire country for the Swiss Mennonites. Professor Kühler referred to this collection in his address at the Danzig world conference entitled "Relief work as the expression of brotherly love in the past on the part of the Dutch brotherhood."* In this connection he said, "the sum of fifty thousand guilders was raised by them and there were continuous collections even in the smaller congregations (on behalf of the Swiss). I found a report that a general collection was held in the south corner of Friesland in connection with the Lord's supper on behalf of the exiled Swiss brethren. The contribution in Hindeloopen was 228 guilders, in Workum 73, in Warns 80, in Stavoren 26, in Koudum and Molkverum 20 guilders." When one has so much love for the brethren far away, it must also be possible to be reconciled with the brother who is near at hand, no matter how high the human wall of separation, of difference in opinion, and of other distinctions, might be.

The inner disharmony which wrought its destructive work in our congregations for several centuries, seems to have affected our brotherhood very severely. Following this a rapidly growing commercial interest which was energetically promoted and which was favored by fortunate circumstances, led to a degree of prosperity which was not always advantageous for the spiritual well-being of the church. Under the influence of increasing wealth the attitude toward the world was changed in a very substantial degree. Old marks of distinction such as the prohibition of mixed marriage, non-

* *Bericht über die Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz vom* 31. *August bis* 3. *September,* 1930, *im Auftrage der Konferenz herausgegeben von D. Chr. Neff,* p. 4.

resistance, and the refusal to accept political offices, were surrendered. In the so-called "patriotic" era (preliminary to the French revolution), many Mennonites manifested a lively interest in political questions of the time.

The course of Dutch Mennonite history teaches us that it is much easier to accommodate oneself to the world than to orient oneself toward the kingdom of God. Without doubt little was left of the idea of the kingdom of God in an age when it was possible to express the fundamental principle of living with the gentle admonition, "speak well, do well, think well."* It is scarcely necessary to be a member of a Christian church in order to maintain the virtues implied in this conception of living. Factors such as these help us to understand the reason for the shocking decline in membership in the church in this period. In the course of a century the membership sank from 160,000 in the year 1700 to 27,000 in the year 1809.

Necessity teaches men to seek new ways and new methods of work. Thus it was the need created by the Napoleonic regime with its reduction of property values, the so-called "tiërceering", and the consequent increasing impoverishment of the people, which led to a revival. The founding of the Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit in the year 1811 was a measure designed to gather the best forces of the Church together to counteract the decay of our congregations which had set in in the eighteenth century and was constantly growing in extent.

The seminary which was established in 1735 by the Amsterdam church as a result of a conviction that trained preachers were necessary, now came under the patronage of the leading churches of the country. The Amsterdam congregation had borne the entire cost of the seminary ever since its founding, but as the result of the "tiërceering" its annual income was so reduced that it had to call on the help of the sister congregations to maintain the seminary.

Thus in the year 1811 the A. D. S. came into existence as a voluntary association of the impoverished congregations of the country for the double purpose of (1) providing for the continuance of the seminary so that the congregations might be provided with academically trained preachers, and (2) aiding the weaker

* This was the theme of a sermon which Claas (also called Calf) Nomen, a merchant and lay preacher at Zaandam, delivered in the Mennonite Church there at the request of Peter the Great on the occasion of his visit to Zaandam.

congregations by means of annual subsidies so that they might be able to support such academically trained preachers.

This rather limited goal for the A. D. S. may seem at first sight to be somewhat insignificant, but actual experience has demonstrated that by this means the maintenance of the congregations was achieved. The splendid centenary celebration of the A. D. S. in 1911 gave abundant evidence of the wide extent to which the important work of the A. D. S. for our brotherhood had won recognition and appreciation. To be sure, although our congregations owe their preservation in part to the establishment of the A. D. S., we are not ignorant of the fact that more than a practical organization is necessary for the maintenance of the life and the future of religious congregations.

Let us now consider the inner life of our congregations in the nineteenth century. What still remained of the expectation of the kingdom of God?

When Professor Cramer, in the *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* of 1901, presented his survey of what the nineteenth century had brought our brotherhood, he closed his report with a sentence which is remarkable for its undisguised realism. He said: "we have no ground to be particularly proud as we look back over the past century, but neither have we ground for complaint, rather we should be thankful." The last century did not bring a period of revived prosperity such as would have recalled the earlier past of glorious memory. There was work for the kingdom of God, but the expectation of the kingdom was strongly colored with the spirit of this world ("diesseitig"). There was much striving to attain a more ideal type of life by means of an orderly development. In the common conception, man was considered to be a noble being called to great things as God's co-worker in the promotion of general development and the progress of the common welfare.

Herewith I come to the last part of my address, namely a survey of our confused modern age, an age full of cares and problems, full of difficulties, but also fortunately full of possibilities.

The difficult time which began with the year 1914, a time of world war and world crisis, has left us little of the ethically optimistic idealism of the liberal faith in a progressive evolution. We are all keenly conscious of the fact that our congregations at the present time are standing before a tremendous task. We must dig

deeper than the nineteenth century generation has done. We constantly hear in our circles the summons to a new examination of our own genius. But this genius has meaning only if it also bears in it the marks of the eternal. "The fashion of this world passeth away" (I Corinthians 7:31); "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2: 17). According to these Scriptures "the eternal" consists of obedience to the Word of God.

Thus we stand before two tasks in a day full of confusion and concern, in a fateful world situation, in a critical hour of world history, for we must find guiding principles which will show us how we can be true to the expectation of the Kingdom of God. In this connection the well-tested word of the prophet is still true, "despise not the day of small things." In a day when so many things are beginning to totter it often seems foolish to be so concerned about human arrangements and human organization. And yet these are the means by which results may be achieved in life, whether they are small or great. We must be fully conscious however that all this is only a human attempt, and yet that with all their human imperfections our organizations are trying to gather in a harvest for eternity. Our two organizations the A. D. S. (Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit) and the Gemeentedagbewegung are in the service of the eternal.

As a result of its reorganization in 1923-24, the A. D. S. has become the central association to which all the Mennonite congregations of the Netherlands voluntarily belong. Thereby for the first time in our history an organization has been created which includes all the Dutch congregations. Four German congregations also belong to the A. D. S., namely, Emden, Leer, Gronau, and Norden.

In its new form, as in the old one, the A. D. S. considers its first and most important task to be the support of the seminary and aid to the needy congregations. In addition to its executive committee, the most important standing committees are therefore the Board of Trustees for the seminary, and the "committee for distribution."

Following its reorganization, the A. D. S. launched out in new methods. By means of provincial conferences called "Landdage" the representatives of the congregations are brought together for a discussion of the work and the interests of the society and the broth-

erhood. The work for "scattered Mennonites" has been promoted more actively. With the support of the A. D. S. new groups have been organized into self-supporting congregations, and thus have become valuable new building stones in the life of the Mennonites of Holland.

But the most important new development since the reorganization is the fact that the A. D. S. has stepped forward as the representative body which represents the brotherhood to the outside world and as such maintains more or less close relations with other bodies, such as "the Central Commission of Liberal Protestantism" and "the Ecumenical Movement". The A. D. S. joined the C. C. by majority vote. The C. C. led the way in the organization of a radio broadcasting association which also publishes a periodical called "Vrije Geluiden" which has manifested much interest in our world conference. The closing sermon of the conference on Friday July 3, at Witmarsum will be broadcast over its station.

The "Ecumenical Movement," which is well characterized by reference to the names of Nathan Söderblom, Adolf Keller, Stockholm and Lausanne, is gradually winning more support in the Netherlands. As a result of the active co-operation of the various church bodies of the Netherlands, a "Raad van Nederlandsche Kerken voor Praktisch Christendom" (Council of Netherlands Churches for Practical Christianity) has been established. A department of this council is called "Committee for the Unemployed," which has understood the cry, "young Holland longs for work", and which has established "work camps", by which it has attempted to alleviate to some extent the physical and moral damage arising from unemployment. By means of such organizations we Mennonites of Holland are enabled to co-operate with other groups through our own central organization, the A. D. S.

Another organization which is active in practical work is our Doopsgezinde Gemeentedagbewegung (Mennonite Conference Movement) which was established in 1917 and arose originally out of the Woodbrooke Movement. It furnished also the opportunity for the consolidation of the right wing movement in our brotherhood. By means of its "working groups" (Arbeitsgruppen), for Bible study, for missions, against military service, for the unemployed, and the G. D. A. (Gemeinschaft von dienenden Arbeitern), all of which are directed toward practical work, also by means of

the brotherhood houses in Elspeet, Fredeshiem and Schoorl, this movement has produced concrete practical results of value for our congregations and for individual members.

Dutch Mennonites have three publications, *De Zondagsbode,* which is the organ of the A. D. S., *Brieven,* the organ of the Gemeentedagbewegung, and a third, *De Hoeksteen,* which is the publication of the Dutch Mennonite Young People's Association which was founded in 1928. The Frisian Mennonite Young People's Association was founded in 1924, and at that time produced an association song in the Frisian dialect. The young people's movement which originally developed out of the "Gemeentedag" movement, has now for some time been independent and has gone its own way, even though it returns each year to the mother house Elspeet, where it was born, for its annual conference.

I do not wish to overlook the practical Christian-philanthropic gospel mission work of our Mennonite Missionary Society even though it will be discussed in a special address during this conference. This work, which was established in 1847, supports two stations in Java, Kelet and Dono Rodjo, which can be called in the fullest sense of the word "saving institutions" (Heilanstalten). Before the world war the chief support for this work came from our Russian brethren and sisters. I also cannot fail to mention the extensive work which has been carried on now for 15 to 16 years for the benefit of our Russian brethren in the difficult time of their great suffering, through the "General Commission for Foreign Relief", and the "Dutch Mennonite Emigrant Relief Office".

The sense of solidarity with our Mennonite brethren in foreign countries has been increased powerfully by the sharing of the sufferings of the dark days which have been experienced in recent years. But I should like to state here candidly and unreservedly that more than the experience of the common need alone binds us together. This conference is the clearest proof that we feel ourselves to be Menno's folk, united as having a common glorious past, and united for the future because we all face the same high and holy task, namely, loyal service to and untiring labor for the Kingdom of God. Not all is gold that glitters. He who labors, "striving and contriving", is constantly tempted to think of himself as somehow different from and better than others. Nevertheless the promise holds for us also that for those who seek the kingdom in truth, many, many things

will come to pass far above our expectations, far above even our prayer and our understanding.

Hence let us go forward in our labors for the building of the Church in the humble consciousness that we desire to serve God in and through our congregations. We are living in an anxious day. Many a one thinks that this world is a dying world. Our generation needs a hope in the future, a new, or better the old, hope in the Gospel of Christ: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33), and "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). Our confidence, our hope is in God.

"Und wenn wir gar nichts fühlen von Seiner Macht,
Gott bringt uns doch zum Ziele, auch durch die Nacht."

THE MENNONITES OF GERMANY, INCLUDING DANZIG AND POLAND

CHRISTIAN NEFF

Weierhof, Germany

"I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Rev. 3:8). These are the words of Jesus to the church in Philadelphia, but it seems to me that He spoke these words also directly to our church. "Behold I have set before thee an open door." Truly it was so in our German land 400 years ago. The Anabaptist Movement had been transplanted from Switzerland to Germany and almost everywhere it found an open door. It spread with remarkable rapidity far and wide, and congregations were established in numbers. But of the details of this early history we have only recently come to be informed through the publication of the ancient documents concerning the rise and growth of Anabaptism in Germany. Thus far two volumes have appeared, one of 1199 quarto pages dealing with Württemberg, and the other of 375 pages dealing with part of Bavaria. These volumes present evidence of a remarkable expansion of the Anabaptist movement in regions into which we hitherto had not known that it had come. We are increasingly astonished at the information coming to light concerning a similar spread of the movement to other parts of our land, to the Palatinate, Baden, Thuringia, Hesse, the Harz, the Rhineland, Friesland, Holstein, East and West Prussia, and also Austria.

In South Germany the leaders of the movement were highly educated and gifted men such as Hans Denk, Michael Sattler, Dr. Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marbeck and others. Their achievements in word and in writing are still worthy of our acclaim. They won numerous followers in town and country. But soon the most barbarous persecutions set in. Almost all of the above-named leaders died an early death as martyrs. Thousands followed them to the scaffold and the block. And yet the movement was not suppressed. The word of the Lord as quoted above applied to it, "And no one

can shut the door." No human power could altogether prevent the spread of Anabaptism, even though its rapid and extensive growth was soon past.

A gifted artisan now stepped into the breach, Melchior Hofmann by name. He was the channel by which Anabaptism was transplanted to North Germany and Holland. Very early in his career a chiliastic-fanatical tendency came to light in his teaching, he emphasized the expectation of the imminent return of Christ. This fanaticism ultimately led to a catastrophe for the young Anabaptist movement in North Germany, for fanatical religious enthusiasts and adventurers succeeded in turning the situation to their own advantage. The notorious "Anabaptist Kingdom" in Münster in Westphalia was established. But its reign was brief, for in 1535 the city was captured and the "Kingdom" was destroyed root and branch. Münster was not true Anabaptism, but the tragedy of Münster was also a tragedy for peaceful Anabaptism which suffered incalculable damage from the notoriety which followed. Even in our time Mennonitism is still blamed for the terrible excesses of Münster.

In the gracious providence of God our church received a leader about this time who was able by his untiring devotion as preacher and teacher to lead the church through the troublous times and establish it in its distinctive character. This leader was Menno Simons whose conversion from popery 400 years ago we are celebrating with gratitude this year. Although he was constantly in danger of his life he was permitted to the end to continue his labors in the service of our brotherhood until his death in 1561. By his extensive travels in Holland and North Germany, and by his numerous writings, he exerted a great and beneficial influence in our congregations which has continued to the present time. It is true, to be sure, that the dynamic of the Anabaptist movement had been broken, and that for the future it had only strength to live on in quietness and to some extent in secrecy. The number of its adherents was greatly reduced. Henceforth the word of the Lord which He spoke to the church in Philadelphia also applied to it; "Thou hast a little strength."

In the Palatinate and in the rest of Germany the authorities sought with all means at their command to root out the movement. The brutal imperial law of April 23, 1529 authorizing this extirpation furnished the basis for a campaign which was carried on with

vindictive thoroughness and with constant reference to the Münster excesses as justification. Only meagre Mennonite remnants were able to maintain themselves in South Germany beyond the Thirty Years War; most of the brotherhood fell a prey to the continuing persecutions or emigrated to Moravia. Following the Thirty Years War, however, a new stream of immigrant brethren came into the devastated territories of the Palatinate. These were Swiss Mennonites who had been forced to leave their home land because of their faith. The Elector Karl Ludwig gave them permission to come into the land in 1664, against the protests of the Reformed clergy. However, the Mennonites in the Palatinate were barely tolerated and received only limited rights and privileges; they were made citizens of second grade, mere "denizens," like the Jews. Even then their number was limited; no more than 200 families were permitted to live in the land. The endless wars of the time which followed, with their atrocities, brought intense suffering upon the Palatinate Mennonites. Many emigrated to America. At the present time forty Mennonite congregations exist in South Germany with approximately 3,200 souls including unbaptized children. These congregations have been united since 1889 in the "Conference of South German Mennonites." In addition there is also an organization of congregations known as the "Union of Baden-Württemberg-Bavaria" which includes nearly all the congregations in these three provinces. The congregations in Bavaria, except the congregation at Ingolstadt, formed a "Union of Bavarian Congregations" in 1926-1928 which was incorporated as a religious body and received the same legal rights as the state churches. Bavarian Mennonites have enjoyed full rights as citizens since 1801.

We now turn our steps northward across the Main and the Moselle Rivers into the territory known as the "Eifel." Here also Anabaptism once had an open door. In a 1557 letter from the congregations of interior Germany to those in Holland, we read that "from the Eifel to Moravia there were 50 congregations, some of which had 500 to 600 members." At the present time only something more than a dozen Mennonite families live in scattered farms in this region, families which belong in part to the Palatinate congregation of Neudorferhof and in part to the congregation of Neuwied.

400 years ago the Anabaptists who lived along the Rhine from the Eifel to the Dutch border manifested a very active life, particularly in the cities of Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne. Here was the place where noble leaders such as Hans Reiffer, Thomas Imbroich, and Matthew Cervaes were brutally martyred. The Catholic church has the dubious honor of having succeeded in completely destroying the Anabaptist movement in the territory where it had full power. But in the territory of Jülich this was not the case and the movement was able to maintain itself somewhat longer. Here the "Wassenberger preachers" had prepared the soil, and here Anabaptism won a great following. For more than a hundred years it was able to withstand the storms of continuing persecution. As late as 1622 the congregation in Gladbach still numbered about 500 souls in 138 families, and from here in 1611 the ministers sent an epistle to the brethren in Holland. However, the Catholic Pfalzgraf, Wolfgang Wilhelm, finally succeeded in exiling the entire group. Most of the exiles settled in Crefeld, where they contributed greatly to the development of that city. What Crefeld is today it owes for the most part to the Mennonites, for the silk and wool textile industry has been largely in their hands. The life of the young congregation here developed favorably. In the second half of the eighteenth century trained ministers took the place of lay preachers. For the most part they were able men whose influence extended far beyond the borders of their own congregation. Today the Crefeld Mennonite Church has a membership of approximately 800 souls and is one of the largest Mennonite Churches in Germany.

In Emmerich, Cleve and Goch the congregations were not able to maintain themselves in spite of promising beginnings, and today these churches are all extinct. On the other hand, in 1887 a new congregation was established in the textile city of Gronau near the Dutch border; it owes its establishment chiefly to the van Delden and Stroink families, who contributed largely to the building of a beautiful meetinghouse in which monthly services are conducted by the Mennonite preacher from Emden. At the present time Gronau is joined with Emden, Leer and Norden in a sort of federation of congregations, all served by one preacher. Emden is the oldest Mennonite congregation in Germany, founded by Melchior Hofmann in 1530. Early Mennonite leaders like Menno Simons, Dirk Philips and Leonhard Bouwens all labored in Emden for short

periods of time, and several important meetings were held here, including a famous religious debate in 1578. Although the congregation suffered much from persecution by the state as well as from strife within, under the leadership of capable ministers and outstanding laymembers it was able to maintain itself through all difficulties. Finally, after a hard struggle, it achieved full recognition under the Prussian government with full political, civil, and religious rights. Although it declined in numbers the congregation has continued to occupy an influential place among German Mennonites until modern times. For a time the center of gravity in the East Frisian congregations was in Leer and Norden. These congregations had a still more difficult struggle for existence than Emden and were constantly subjected to all kinds of persecution and expropriation by the East Frisian authorities. Even under the Prussian regime they had to suffer much at first. The membership has remained small, with Leer at the present time numbering twenty baptized members and ten children, and Norden approximately 100 members. In Norden the Waterlander and Flemish branches were united on April 12, 1780.

The congregation at Friedrichstadt a. d. Eider, which today numbers scarcely twenty souls and is served twice yearly with the Lord's Supper by the minister of the congregation at Hamburg-Altona, has a notable past. Recently its history has been written by a Lutheran pastor of Bavaria. The first Mennonites settled in the city in 1623 upon receiving permission from Duke Friedrich III of Schleswig-Holstein to immigrate and also being guaranteed religious and civil rights such as were not enjoyed by their co-religionists anywhere in Germany. At the beginning there were three Mennonite branches here, the High German, the Flemish, and the Frisian. In 1698 the three were united in one congregation which numbered 178 baptized members in 1708. But one hundred years later the number had shrunk to thirty-six, with a present membership of eighteen including four children.

Mennonite families settled in Hamburg-Altona as early as 1575. Here also at first there were three branches, which finally united in 1682. At the beginning of the 18th century Jacob Denner led a schismatic movement known as the "Dompelaars" (immersionists) which lasted for a decade. Some of the Hamburg Mennonite families, such as Roosen and van der Smissen, attained

great wealth and rendered outstanding service to the city, which is witnessed by the naming of several streets in their honor. Because of its wealth the Hamburg Mennonite congregation was able to give generous aid to sister congregations in need. In 1914 the congregation built a new church with parsonage which was dedicated October 1, 1919. The membership of the church, which is now about 350 souls, was formerly larger, having been over 600 in the middle of the 18th century. Hamburg was the headquarters for the "Union of Mennonite Congregations in Germany" from 1902 to 1935.

The largest German Mennonite city congregation is Danzig, founded probably soon after 1530. Menno Simons is said to have labored in this congregation about 1550 on the occasion of his journey in this region. His co-laborer, Dirk Philips, labored here for a number of years until his death in 1568. In Danzig the Flemish and Frisian branches were strict opponents, and each group maintained an active relationship with its sister congregations in Holland. Because of their industry and ability as artisans and merchants the Mennonites of Danzig suffered much at the hands of the native population. They were greatly handicapped in the conduct of their business and frequently had to pay dearly to the Polish kings for protection. Under the Prussian regime conditions improved. After 1801 Mennonites could acquire citizenship and could purchase property by direct negotiations without intermediaries. In 1808 the Frisian and Flemish branches united. Since both meeting-houses were destroyed during the Napoleonic Wars a new church was built in 1818 which was dedicated in 1819. In later years a parsonage was built and also a new "home for the poor." The membership has fluctuated. In 1831 the congregation consisted of 635 souls. Emigration to Russia and America brought the number down to 410, but since 1882 the number has doubled due to considerable migration of Mennonites from the country to the city. Today the Danzig congregation lists 1400 souls in its membership.

Berlin is, next to Gronau, the youngest Mennonite city church in Germany. In 1937 it will be fifty years old. From small beginnings it has developed into an active congregation with at present approximately 400 souls. Hitherto the leadership has been in the hands of capable laymen, but the congregation expects to appoint its first pastor soon. The membership consists largely of Mennonites from Eastern Germany who have settled in Berlin.

The city of Elbing has two Mennonite congregations. The larger one, Elbing-Ellerwald, was established about the middle of the 16th century by Dutch Mennonites who had fled from their native land and settled in the neighborhood of the city of Elbing as farmers. At that time the city did not tolerate the Mennonites, and repeatedly endeavored to drive them away. In spite of this the congregation was able to maintain itself, and in 1585 the Mennonites were granted the privilege of becoming citizens of the city and engaging in the silk trade. The first meeting-house was erected in 1590, the second in 1900. The congregation also possesses a meeting-house in the nearby village of Ellerwald. The two parts of the congregation have constituted one organization from the beginning (since 1606) except for a temporary schism. At the present time the membership consists of about 800 souls. Only since 1923 has the congregation been served by a trained minister. The other congregation in Elbing arose out of a schism in the middle of the 19th century over the question of appointing a theologically trained minister. A number of families in the city part of the congregation organized a new group, and appointed Carl Harder of Königsberg as their minister. The church was built in 1852. The new congregation affiliated itself with the congregation in Königsberg. The two congregations have been affiliated ever since although at the present time Elbing is the mother church with about 150 souls, whereas Königsberg has scarcely fifty. The Königsberg congregation formerly was a flourishing church and very wealthy, but it has been on the decline for many years.

The largest group of German Mennonites today is to be found in what was formerly West and East Prussia. This territory was torn apart into three divisions by the treaty of Versailles of 1919. The largest part became the Free State of Danzig. A smaller part was added to Poland in the Polish corridor. The rest remains as a part of Prussia. This political division cuts right through the Mennonite communities and has greatly handicapped the relations between the congregations which were formerly very prosperous both spiritually and economically. The Mennonite settlement in this region is very old. Some of the congregations were established in Reformation times. Duke Albrecht invited Dutch settlers to come to his devastated territories which had suffered because of the Prussian-Polish War. Many Dutch Mennonites took advantage of the

offer. They were able to contribute to the development of the region by constructing dykes and drainage canals which drained large swampy areas, and also by very intelligent cultivation of the soil. In recognition of the contribution of the Mennonites which benefited the entire land, the Prussian and Polish authorities continued to tolerate them in spite of the constant agitation of the Lutheran clergy. The Mennonite devotion to the principles of non-resistance brought frequent difficulties. On this account many emigrated to Russia at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, and later to America. In spite of all difficulties, however, and in spite of the considerable emigration, the large country congregations have maintained themselves strikingly well to the present day. They are by name Heubuden, Ladekopp-Orlofferfelde, Tiegenhagen, Fürstenwerder, Thiensdorf-Markushof (Rosengart), Rosenort, Schönsee, and Tragheimerweide. The membership totals about 7,000 souls. Together with the city churches of Danzig and Elbing-Ellerwald these congregations constitute the "Conference of Former West Prussian Mennonite Congregations."

Poland has eight Mennonite congregations at the present time, which fall into three groups. The first group consists of three congregations which formerly belonged to West Prussia, Montau-Gruppe, Schönsee and Obernessau. The second group consists of three congregations in what was formerly Russian Poland, Deutsch-Kazun, Deutsch-Wymysle and Wola Wydezynska. The third group consists of the congregation known as Lemberg-Kiernica in what was formerly Galicia. The three groups have no connection with each other at all; each lives a separate life for itself. The first group feels itself a part of the former West Prussia Mennonite settlement. Very little is known about the history of the second group. The congregation known as Deutsch-Kazun was founded about 1750, and apparently grew very rapidly. About 1846 the number of baptized members was 800 to 900. Emigration to Russia and America, and in recent times to Paraguay, has greatly reduced the membership, so that at the present time it is scarcely more than 400 souls. The congregation known as Deutsch-Wymysle consists of two independent congregations, which have separate baptism and communion, but which nevertheless maintain a united Sunday service. The larger group of the two practices immersion as the mode of baptism, and also feet-washing after the Lord's Supper.

The membership of the two congregations together is scarcely 300 souls. The third congregational group, the one in Galicia, is a widely scattered group. Recently an important history of this congregation was written by Professor Bachman. Emperor Joseph II of Austria had issued his famous decree inviting foreign colonists on September 17, 1781. On the basis of this decree twenty-eight Mennonite families, chiefly from the Palatinate, migrated to Galicia, arriving on March 29, 1784. They settled in three townships; Falkenstein, Einsiedel, and Rosenberg. Later other settlements were established at Neuhof, Kiernica and Horozanna. Later a portion of the congregation emigrated to Russia and Volhynia, and after a time from there to America. Between 1878 and 1883 seventy-five families emigrated to America. In 1862 the portion of the congregation at Kiernica had already appointed a theologically trained pastor, while the other groups retained the lay ministry. On March 7, 1909 the entire group organized itself as a united congregation with the name "Christian Mennonite Church of Kiernica-Lemberg" with official headquarters in the city of Lemberg. At the present time the congregation consists of 550 members scattered over one hundred distinct places. For the past twenty-one years it has published a church paper which now appears quarterly under the title, *Mennonitisches Gemeindeblatt.*

We have now taken a spiritual journey through the German and Polish Mennonite congregations and have taken a brief look at their past and their present. The same picture appears over and over again. God gave them an open door; there was no lack of forcible attempts to close that door, but the attempts were only partially successful. Rather, the word of the Lord was fulfilled: "And no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." We constitute a small force; we are small in number, 20,000 Mennonites among 70,000,000 people. The Baptists and Methodist groups, which are much younger in history, have far outdistanced us. These groups are playing their part as a real force in the battles of the present; they give the impression that they are capable of maintaining themselves. How will it go with us? Will we be pushed aside as a small force? This is not my fear; I fear rather that our congregations will suffer because of inner weakness, because of a deficiency of faith and loyalty to the name of Jesus and His Word. As long as the word ap-

plies to us which Jesus spoke to the church in Philadelphia: "Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name," we can be strong in spite of our little strength in number, and no power in the world will be able to destroy us. So was it in the past. So is it now in Russia in the present. This Mennonite World Congress should be an admonition to us to examine ourselves in the light of the past and in the light of the threatening present, an admonition to unite our forces and to strengthen each other in our faith and in our devotion, that we may keep the word of Christ and not deny His name. God help us for His love's sake.

THE MENNONITES OF SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE

SAMUEL GEISER

Orange, Tavannes, Switzerland

I am particularly happy to bring greetings from the Mennonite Churches of our beloved Switzerland, the motherland of Mennonitism, to the Mennonite brethren and sisters from various parts of the world who are assembled here. God has not only made it possible for us to meet each other here in Amsterdam, to greet each other and to come into contact with one another, but it is also a gathering which will promote the interests of the Kingdom of God, if on this occasion we experience in a special manner the revelation of God through the person of our ever-present Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, so that we may be blessed in our personal life and so that also the spiritual upbuilding of our congregations may be promoted.

I should like to base my remarks concerning the history of the Mennonites in Switzerland on the text found in Deut. 32:7 where we read as follows: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

Why are the people of God urged to remember the former times? Not only to revive ancient memories and to delight in them, but as God Himself says, to consider what He had done, to be convinced of God's work in the lives of the fathers. And that is what we want to do here today, to take a brief look at the marvelous work of God in our congregations in past times. The original Anabaptist movement, the establishment of the first Anabaptist congregation in Zurich, was not the work of cold speculation, as the activity of Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and Georg Blaurock is represented in many church histories, nor is it the result of a fanatical enthusiasm, nor the illusion of a stubborn company of fantastic folks, as the contemporary historians of that time, Heinrich Bullinger and Konrad Schmid, described the Anabaptists. Rather I venture to assert, on the basis of abundant source materials, that it was a creative act of God, the work of our God, who in the face of

the ecclesiastical decay of the time wrought in our forefathers through the Holy Spirit the desire to establish a fellowship of the saints according to the principles of the apostolic church.

The chronicles of the Hutterian brethren, which are based on manuscript archives and which go back to the time of the beginning of the Reformation, give the following account concerning that which happened "in Switzerland because of the special awakening and leading of God."

> "Als Luther und Zwingli die tück und büberei des röm. Antichrists, der babylonischen Hure genugsam entdeckt, wie mit Donnerschlägen alles niedergeschlagen und zum tail ein Licht aufgesteckt, haben sie demselben nicht richtig nachgefolget, sondern sich an den weltlichen Gewalt der Finsternis gehenkt, darum auch kein frömmers gottesfürchtiges Volk nit aufgezogen haben . . . und ob es wol einen gueten Anfang göttlicher Erscheinung und Ammuets gehabt, ist ihnen das Licht der rechten Wahrheit wiederum verdunklet.—— —— Da hat Gott im Jahr 1525 . . . das Licht seiner Gnaden eben eingeführt und hat die lang verdruckt Kirchen angefangen das Haupt wieder empor zu heben und Christus rechter Art zu verstehen, sich von dem antichristischen Wesen zu sondern, sich durch den Tauf mit ihrem Christo in wahrer Untergebung des Glaubens zu vereinbaren."

According to this report the Swiss Brethren wanted to organize a new church according to the principles of the ancient church. Only believers should be received into their fellowship on the basis of a voluntary choice. Zwingli declared: "they will not get me to start such a sect." The attitude of Zwingli seemed to the Brethren to be treason to the cause of the Gospel. With much expectation they had hoped that the Reformation would bring about not only an improvement in ecclesiastical conditions, but the realization of the biblical pattern for the church, in which the church is the bearer of the Christian life and the steward of the original constitution and discipline of the church. The fundamental concept of the nature of the Christian church which I have just mentioned inevitably led to the rejection of an all-inclusive church, as Zwingli clearly taught. With keen vision the early brethren had seen that much of what the Reformation was doing was unsatisfactory. "Although mass and images were done away with, yet there was no repentance," as they emphasized. A merely external creed did not make the one who professed it a Christian. In many of those who joined the Reformation the brethren had the impression that a real experience of salvation in the soul was lacking. They considered a purely exter-

nally assimilated Christianity as insufficient. "In their conception of salvation our forefathers held less to a purely juridical imputed righteousness by faith, but rather to a righteousness of life wrought in them by the grace of God," said Jacob Kroeker at the 400th anniversary celebration in Basel in 1925. The fathers were not satisfied with a one-sided imputed righteousness without the inner change of heart, the new birth. That is the reason for their constant insistence that a righteousness of life must be the inescapable (unerlässliche) consequence of righteousness by faith. The attitude of the brethren in Zurich toward the Reformation was therefore one which designated it as inadequate. However the negative side, the rejection of the concept of the Church as held by the reformers on the part of the brethren, is not the central point, for the main emphasis lies in the positive side, the conception of the meaning of salvation for the inner life. The experience of salvation did not limit itself only to the righteousness of life which was wrought within by the Holy Spirit, but also manifested itself in the union of those who together with them had drawn near to each other in the fellowship of the spirit and life. Furthermore the brethren felt themselves called to testify to the world of the work of God within. "Die Erkenntniss drängte zum Bekenntniss."

In a solemn hour in a meeting about January 25, 1525 the brethren publicly confessed and confirmed their experience of salvation by holy baptism, in spite of the fact that several days earlier, (January 18, 1525) the city council of Zurich had officially required infant baptism. The chronicles of the Hutterian Brethren report this meeting in the following account:

> "Und es hat sich begeben, dass sie beieinander gewesen sind, bis sie die Angst anging und auf sie kam, ja in ihrem Herzen gedrungen wurden. Da haben sie angefangen ihre Knie zu biegen vor dem höchsten Gott im Himmel und ihn angeruft, als einen Herzenskundigen und gebeten: dass er ihnen wollte geben zu tun seinen göttlichen Willen und dass er ihnen wollte Barmherzigkeit beweisen. Denn Fleisch und Blut und menschlicher Fürwitz hat sie gar nicht getrieben, weil sie wohl gewusst, was sie darüber werden dulden und leiden müssen.
>
> "Nach dem Gebet ist der Geörg vom Haus Jakob aufgestanden und hat um Gottes willen geboten den Konrad Grebel, dass er ihn wolle taufen mit der rechten christlichen Taufe, mit solchem Bitt und Begehren, hat der Konrad ihn getauft . . .
>
> "Wie nun das geschehen, haben die andern gleicherweise an dem Geörgen begehrt, dass er sie taufen soll, welches er auf ihr Be-

gehren also tat, und haben sich also in hoher Furcht Gottes miteinander dem Herrn ergeben, (einer den andern zum Dienst am Evangelium bestätigt) und angefangen den Glauben zu lehren und zu halten."

Time will not permit me to relate in detail the bitter struggle of the leaders of the Reformation with the Anabaptists which Zwingli himself describes as much harder than the struggle with Catholicism. I assume that most of us are familiar with the sorrowful story of this struggle which frequently led to the execution of the brethren and their leaders. Throughout this struggle what seems great to me is the heroic strength of the brethren in overcoming even the greatest suffering. Their loyalty to their faith made a powerful impression even upon their enemies. The question as to whence they derived the strength to remain steadfast and endure is answered by the chronicles of the Hutterian Brethren which give the following explanation:

"Sie haben vom Wasser, das aus dem Heiligtum Gottes fliesst, ja aus dem Brunnen des Lebens getrunken und davon ein Herz bekommen, das vom Menschensinn und -verstand nicht vermag begriffen zu werden. Sie haben empfunden, dass ihnen Gott das Kreuz tragen hilft und haben die Bitterkeit des Todes überwunden. Das Feuer Gottes brannte in ihren Herzen. Ihr Glaube hat eben geblüht wie eine Gilgen (Lilie), ihre Treue wie eine Rose, ihre Frömmigkeit und Redlichkeit wie die Blume der Pflanzung Gottes. — Sie haben das Horn in Zion blasen gehört und haben es wohl verstanden — und deswillen haben sie alle Pein und Marter zurückgeschlagen und sich darob nicht entsetzt. Ihr heilig Gemüth hat die Ding, so in der Welt fürgehen, einem Schatten gleich geachtet, grösserer Dinge vergewisst. Sie waren also von Gott erzogen, dass sie überall nichts kannten, nichts suchten, nichts wollten, nichts liebten denn das ewig himmlische Gut allein."

What a beautiful testimony. Would to God that it could also be said of us today, the modern Anabaptists.

The Anabaptist movement spread rapidly from Zurich to the territory of Berne. Here also, in the story of the Bernese Anabaptists, I dare not lose myself in historical details. Yet it is instructive to take a look at the inner and outer position of the Anabaptists in the time of the Reformation and to secure a clear picture of the faith and life of the Swiss Brethren on the basis of the rich source material which is available. The fundamental principles of the Swiss Brethren will not be found written down in constitutions, confessions of faith, or binding disciplines, but will be found preserved

in the records of court trials and in the minutes of the great debates of Zofingen (July 1-9, 1532) and of Berne (March 11-17, 1538). On the basis of these records we can derive a sound knowledge of the principles of the Anabaptists. It is noteworthy that the teaching found in these records agrees entirely with the articles of faith found in the Seven Articles of Schlatten am Randen as adopted by the South German Anabaptists in 1527. The whole theology of the brethren was so grounded in the Scripture that it is correct to say of the leaders of Anabaptism that their position was primarily a holding fast to the biblical conception of the church. One of the outstanding characteristics of the church life of our fathers was this, that they sought to make both their inner and their outer life to conform with the teachings of the apostles. The central emphasis of the entire Anabaptist movement was placed upon a return to the original sources of the Christian church. All their thinking and acting was the expression of an earnest endeavor to retain the essence of original Christianity.

Characteristics of Original Anabaptism as Found in the Original Documents

1. Let us direct our gaze first to the experience of salvation which is emphasized so strongly by our fathers. They took their stand consciously on the experience of regeneration, wrought in them by Christ and the Holy Spirit. Their relation to God was based on the crucified and risen Lord. In accord with this one of the fundamental characteristics of our fathers was their thorough comprehension of the biblical teaching of justification by faith. Their inner and outer life was determined by their position as children of their heavenly father. The experience of salvation which the Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation had was grounded thoroughly on the blood sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, or in other words the blood of our Savior was for them the ground of their atonement and redemption. As evidence of this listen to the following expressions: "Die sich von der Welt und Finsternis absondern und sich begeben fürderhin Christo dem Herrn in Gehorsam zu leben durch des Blut sie auch erlöst worden." "Darum sind wir gereinigt und gewaschen durch das Blut Jesu Christi, da höret ihr, von was Reinigung oder Rechtfertigung wir reden." "Christus hat

den Bund des Neuen Testaments in seinem Blut eingeführt." The last statement is the testimony of the Anabaptist leader Hans Hotz in 1538 before the entire council of the city of Berne. The brethren stated that they had learned from the preachers of the state church neither "improvement of life" nor "sanctification from sin." The brethren had drawn their teaching "from the example of Christ and the command of the apostles." Their conception of salvation was oriented toward the individual experience of salvation. For this reason their conception of the grace of God was much more than a theological dogma. They conceived of the grace of God as a revelation of God through the person of Christ in the heart of man.

2. The subjective experience of salvation in our fathers soon found expression in the doctrine of biblical baptism on faith. The strict loyalty to the Scripture which the Anabaptists practiced inevitably led to the rejection of infant baptism. The circumcision of the heart, a true heart faith, had to precede baptism. For this reason they emphasized very strongly that repentance and faith must become the possession of the individual and consequently they asked the very definite question, "Is it possible to add a soul to the church by outward baptism who does not have faith." For them baptism was not "the washing away of the filthiness of the flesh," but rather it was to those who had been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, both "a sure testimony, assurance and witness of their faith in God." The brethren therefore did not look for a magical effect of the water baptism. They were far removed from making salvation dependent upon the rite of baptism. God had sent His messengers, such as Conrad Grebel, to receive by baptism into the church of Christ "those who had become obedient to the teaching of Christ in true repentance of heart." Every soul who desired to be a Christian, would according to Romans VI be "baptized into one body in the death of Christ," raised with Him, and afterward would walk in newness of life "according to the rule of Christ." Thus were the brethren "united with the church of Christ." The divine instruction regarding baptism was, according to Matthew 28 and Mark 16, first to teach, then to believe on Christ, and thereafter to baptize the believers.

3. Another characteristic of the Anabaptists is the doctrine of separation from the world. A church of truly believing personalities in contrast to the official state church which took in the whole

world, that was what the brethren wanted to be. Their conception of the church was irreconcilable with the conception of an all-inclusive church. They charged the reformers with having established their church upon "the worldly government" and consequently of having fellowship with the world, and not standing on the foundation of the word of God. The church should be composed of people who were obedient in faith, redeemed persons. A Christian church would of necessity keep the regulations and ordinances of Christ.

The doctrine of separation was grounded in the antithesis between the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God, between believers and unbelievers. The Anabaptists had an altogether different conception of the "world" than that held by the theologians of the state churches. This gave them the possibility of justifying their doctrine of a radical separation from the world. The word of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world", and the injunction of the apostle Paul, "Come out from among them and be ye separate" (II Cor. 6), was quite sufficient for them to reject the world as unchristian and to separate themselves from it, since the realization of the kingdom of God could never be accomplished in connection with the world. A sharp line of division between the world and the kingdom of God was for them a prerequisite for the victory of the gospel of Christ. In their thinking the church was the fellowship of the disciples of Christ which includes in it all those who have given themselves over to the "obedience of the Gospel." The example of Christ and the apostolic church was definitive for them. They were convinced of the possibility of realizing the ideal church. They said, "in the ancient apostolic church only those were received and planted in the true church who had experienced repentance and a change of life." "In allen, denen das Wort Christi früchtet und grünet, die sind die Gemeinde Gottes, sind göttlicher Natur, werden Brüder und Schwestern genannt. Ist die Kirche von der Welt abgesondert und handelt allein nach der Art Christi, so müssen wir sie als solche bleiben lassen, ist sie aber noch in der Welt, so können wir sie nicht als die Kirche anerkennen." They asserted further that the testimony of conscience confirmed in them that they were sent to teach the church of Christ, to emphasize the difference between good and evil, and consequently "dem Herrn ein Gemeind und Kilchen zuzuführen, die unsträflich sei." It was not the preachers of the state church, but *they* who had "the true church" which

was established on the ground of the apostles and the prophets and which rested on the corner stone of the rock Christ, "the head of the church."

4. A fourth characteristic should be mentioned briefly, namely the unconditional requirement of church discipline. Since the Anabaptists had the apostolic example as their ideal which they strove to attain, namely that the church of Christ should be without spot, it was necessary to remove from the church everything which would dishonor Christ. Even in a church composed of believers only it would be possible at any time that evil should appear. For this reason evil, in whatever form it might appear, even among brethren in the church, should be unconditionally punished according to Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5, and should be cast out of the church. The application of discipline, although it was to be strictly carried through, was to be exercised in love for the improvement and restoration of the erring one. The church was not permitted to apply corporal punishment according to the law in the manner of the worldly government, but could use only "the punishment of Christ according to grace."

In order to complete this characterization of the early Anabaptist churches one should point out other characteristics such as the insistence upon complete freedom of faith and conscience, the requirement of following Christ, the rejection of the oath, the principle of non-resistance according to which the Christian may never use revenge but must love his enemy. But time does not permit this. We have seen that the center of their entire theology was Christ and His church.

In order to realize this New Testament apostolic church, our forefathers, the first Anabaptists, fought and struggled severely. It is true that in their struggle they were defeated, their lot was to suffer wrong. The comment of Solomon which was the result of his clear spiritual vision, can be applied to them (Ecc. 4:1): "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter."

Although our forefathers gave their life blood for their faith in this desperate struggle, and although many an ideal of their conception of the church remained unrealized, nevertheless God gave

His testimony to them by and large and used them as bearers of His redemptive revelation. They were not ashamed as the "church of the poor" to bear the shame of Christ their master.

The Economic Development of Swiss Anabaptism

Let us consider briefly the economic development of Swiss Anabaptism. The statement of the patriarch Jacob and his sons, the brethren of Joseph, which they made to the Egyptian king Pharaoh at the time of their settlement in the land of Goshen, "Your servants are shepherds, we and our fathers" (Genesis 1:46, 32-34, and Genesis 47:3), applies to a considerable extent to the Swiss brethren. In spite of innumerable difficulties the brethren have the honor of being pioneers in the technical advancement of agriculture. In the history of the agriculture of Switzerland and other countries the Swiss Mennonites occupy an outstanding place. The achievements of the Anabaptists in the field of cultural and economic development are today being recognized by many impartial experts in this field. Everywhere they have gone in the entire world they have created prosperous centers of culture. Wherever they have gone the Swiss emigrants have manifested an exceptional understanding of cattle breeding and dairying. In this connection let me refer to David Möllinger, the father of the agriculture of the Palatinate, a grandson of a Swiss Mennonite emigrant from the Canton of Berne who was expelled from his fatherland February 11, 1711.* For further illustration let me refer to the Detweiler family who were driven from Switzerland, "members of which family both in past and present have been outstanding leaders in agriculture both in theory and in practice. In Mennonite economic history they have played a prominent part in the development of a definite South German agricultural type. (*Mennonite Lexicon*). However it is not possible to do more than mention the Mennonite contribution to agriculture as master farmers.

History offers us few points of reference for a satisfactory picture of the economic character of the Swiss Mennonites of the 16th and 17th century. For many decades after the period of persecution the Swiss brethren lived in the most simple circumstances. Their standard of living was very modest, and family life was quiet

* Geiser, Die *Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden*, p. 434, and Correll, *Das schweiz. Taufermennonitentum*, p. 122-123.

and orderly. The economic attitudes of the Swiss Mennonites are well described by Dr. Ernst Correll:

> "Die Lebensform, die von ihnen geprägt wurde, trug den Stempel der Einfachheit. Dies lag schon im Charakter der Absonderung beschlossen. Reichtum und Glanz verwirft Christus der Herr (Luk. 12, 15). Irrelevanz (Unerheblichkeit) für das Heil eines Christenmenschen einerseits, das liebes-kommunistische Pflichtgefühl andererseits, wurden als Wirtschaftsgesinnung gepflegt, von franziskanischen Armutsenthusiasmus war keine Spur. Die Arbeit wurde als eine von Gott gestellte Aufgabe erachtet. Fleiss, Arbeitstreue und andere ökonomische Tugenden erhielten eine religiössittliche Weihe, auf die gerade auch die Gemeindezucht achtete. Erstrebt wurde eine seltsame Verbindung biblischer Muster mit dem, was für ehrsam und als einfältige Art erachtet worden war. Das praktische Lebensideal wuchs auf dem Boden des Handwerker- und Bauerntums . . . . Zurückhaltung vom Handelsgeschäft, Bescheidenheit im 'Kauffen' und 'Merckten' wurden als Maxime wirtschaflichen Gebarens vorgehalten. Massgebend blieb in allen Dingen die Tendenz zur Bedürfnislosigkeit."

The blessings of God rested visibly upon such a life lived in true piety and integrity.

The chief occupation of the Swiss Mennonites, particularly of the Bernese emigrants, was stock breeding, dairying and general farming, as indicated above. Until about 1900 spinning and weaving was a side line, although it was conducted as a hand trade rather than with machines. The French historian Mathiot reports that the numerous Mennonite families which emigrated from Switzerland, especially from the Jura to France were "fermiers, meuniers, tisserands (farmers, millers and weavers)", and adds that they had excellent achievements to their credit. He says further, "They brought under cultivation large areas in the plain and on the mountains, and they excel in breeding and trading in cattle." Concerning the Mennonites in the Vosges mountains he says further, "They are simple in life but intelligent and industrious." And in regard to the attempts to drive the Mennonites out of the land he says, "Most of the land owners were too much interested in the effective development of their property to be willing to give up the service of the Mennonites."

In a similar way the Mennonite refugees who were driven out of the Emmental and settled on the lonely mountain heights of the bishopric of Basel which is today the Bernese Jura, by their hard labor made that land much more productive. The Emmental emi-

grant, who had been reared to the utmost simplicity in the bitter struggle to maintain his existence on the hill-side farms of his native valley, found even the meadows of the Jura mountains giving him a modest prosperity.

Until recent times the Swiss Mennonites with few exceptions could still be credited with the high qualities of agricultural success which had been their historic reputation. Unfortunately the prosperity of the World War and the following years was fateful for them. The price of land, as well as taxes and other expenses, increased enormously. Following this came the time of deflation, the general depression of values, which was catastrophic for many who had excessive debts on their property. It cannot be denied that in many respects the hardships of the present depression which the Mennonites are experiencing are in part due to their own mistakes. The purchase of land at high prices, building expensive buildings, the abandonment of the ancient simplicity, are all factors which have played a part in the intensification of the farmer's difficulties. Although the various forms of government aid have helped to obviate the greatest danger for many, namely the loss of house and home, it will be many years until the Swiss Mennonite farmer recovers from the present depression. So much for the economic aspect of Swiss Mennonitism.

Swiss Emigration

The emigration of Swiss Mennonites from their native land had great significance for the economic and cultural life of the countries into which they came. However to deal with the entire emigration problem in its many aspects would far exceed the limits of this paper, and a statistical report would actually be impossible. All that can be done is to sketch briefly the most significant aspects of the emigration movement without giving the details as they concern the individual countries.

The causes of the emigration of the Mennonites from Switzerland are first the persecutions, second, the military problem as it affected the Mennonite principle of non-resistance, and third, the bad economic conditions or the hindrances to the economic development in the home land. On the whole, the emigration of Swiss Mennonites was not a voluntary movement but was in large part due to the frequent edicts of expulsion by the authorities. It is easy

to understand why a government should expel foreigners for propagating religious doctrines which conflict with the state churchism of the native land, but for our modern concept of justice it is exceedingly difficult to understand the expulsion of native-born citizens who were otherwise obedient subjects, merely on the ground of propagating the Anabaptist cause. No wonder that the Anabaptists at Zurich declared to the government officials, "God created the earth for them as well as for the authorities." And yet numerous Anabaptists were compelled to leave the territory of Zurich, especially in the second period of Anabaptist history in Zurich about the beginning of the seventeenth century. The emigration at this time practically put an end to the remaining Anabaptist congregations in the territory of Zurich.

The expulsion of Mennonites in the canton of Berne was carried through still more harshly than in Zurich. Countless individuals, not only men, but women and aged persons, were driven from their native land into foreign countries. With bleeding hearts the Mennonites left their home land which they loved, to find a refuge in a strange land where they might practice their faith.

The first land of refuge was Moravia where there was a certain degree of toleration for groups outside of the state church.

Another land to which many emigrants went was the Palatinate, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The numerous family names of Bernese origin in the Palatinate indicate a considerable expansion of Mennonitism there as a result of the immigration of the Swiss brethren. Soon after the first appearance of Mennonites in the Palatinate in the sixteenth century, members of the group were called expressly "Swiss Brethren."

A Bernese edict of June 15, 1660, called "endliche Resolution Miner gnädigen Herren," ordered the execution of the plans for expulsion which had been drawn up earlier. The tribulation of the Mennonites in the canton of Berne during the following years was unusually great. In the year 1671 there were a large number of forcible expulsions. About seven hundred persons left Berne for the Palatinate where they arrived in the most miserable condition. The Dutch Mennonites stepped into the breach in the most generous way and kindly cared for their suffering brethren. Many of the exiles were so attached to their native mountains and their relatives who had remained behind that they returned again and again to

their beautiful Emmental. For this reason the Bernese government threatened to brand with branding irons those who returned.

Another important region to which Swiss emigrants went was the Netherlands. The Dutch Mennonites befriended their persecuted brethren in Switzerland in the heartiest fashion. Even though I cannot go into detail here, yet I should like to assure our dear Netherlanders that we Swiss Mennonites have not altogether forgotten the kindness which they manifested to our forefathers. The problem of aiding the Swiss brethren was discussed at a general conference of Dutch Mennonites held in Amsterdam on November 5, 1670. The intervention of the Dutch Mennonites prevented a plan to deport imprisoned Mennonites from Switzerland to the East Indies and North America at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A considerable number of the Mennonites who were to have been handed over to the East India Company were settled in Holland. On August 3, 1711, another "shipment" of arrested Swiss Mennonites which had been sent down the Rhine on four vessels, arrived in Amsterdam. Of this group 126 persons were settled in Groningen, 116 in Deventer, 87 in Kampen, and 21 in Harlingen. The Dutch Mennonites also did everything in their power to secure a more tolerant attitude toward the Mennonites remaining in Berne but had no success. Berne finally broke off the lengthy diplomatic negotiations which had been carried on through the government of Holland and rejected all further attempts to interfere in her private affairs.

There are many traces of Swiss emigration from Berne to the neighboring countries of Alsace-Lorraine and France. The fact that there are no Mennonites in the interior of France and that they are found only in the border provinces, indicates that the Mennonite immigrants into France came mostly from the canton of Berne. This is further confirmed by the fact that the family names of the immigrants are, throughout, German names from that canton. As early as the year 1643 there is a report regarding Mennonites who had already settled there a considerable time before, which reads as follows: "Ehedem hielten sie ihre religiösen Versammlungen in einem Gehölz zwischen St. Marie aux Mines und Schlettstadt. Jetzt vereinigen sie sich in einer Scheuer. Sie haben keine Pfarrer, aber einer von ihnen liest die Schrift in deutscher Sprache vor und sie singen ihre Psalmen nach der Uebersetzung von Lobwasser."

The years 1671 to 1711 witnessed the settlement of a large number of Bernese Mennonites in Alsace, particularly in upper Alsace, in the Vosges mountain region, as well as in the French Jura in what is now the Departement du Doubs. In the principality of Montbeliard Count Leopold Eberhard secured Mennonites to operate his farms. The French historian Mathiot, who gives an account of the Mennonites in Alsace and in the principality of Montbeliard, states that the Mennonites in this region held fast their traditions, and continued to read their Bibles at home and in their meetings. On Sunday the gospel was preached in the meeting, with close adherence to the Bible and accompanied by prayer and singing. In their conduct, he says further, they behaved as strangers and pilgrims, were simple in their manner of life, and were faithful in their work and in keeping their promises, "comme de vrais Chretiens." He adds further that they sought to help one another in material and in spiritual needs.

Elder Pierre Sommer of Grand-Charmont near Montbeliard writes the following in a letter:

> "Not many Mennonites are living today in France and all of them are in the northeast of the country. About 1000 live in Alsace-Lorraine, which as is well known was German territory from 1871 to 1918. This group has retained the German language, whereas those who have lived in French territory continuously since their first arrival at the beginning of the eighteenth century, have become French and have lost the German language almost entirely. Our families all came from Switzerland and long held fast to the German language. Here in Montbeliard we still occasionally had German meetings until a few years ago. The congregations in France are for the most part small, the members are widely scattered, they could not have their own schools, and so could not retain their language. Spiritual life had also sadly deteriorated. Thanks be to God, the last thirty years has witnessed new life and today we have many who have an assurance of salvation through the blood of Christ and who are endeavoring to be true witnesses for the Lord. The congregations in France are organized into a conference which meets twice yearly, once in the spring and once in the fall. The French speaking congregations have their own annual conference in the French language even though they also belong to the official conference."

Sommer has written the following concerning the French Mennonites in the *Mennonite Lexicon*: "The deep piety of the fathers still lives on. In many families the work of the spirit of love and

peace can be felt. At the beginning of the twentieth century earnest endeavors were made to promote spiritual life. By means of a series of conferences of which the first was held in Epinal in the year 1901, attempts were made to draw the isolated congregations closer together by stimulating the sense of solidarity. Themes of general interest were discussed. Attention was called to the necessity of evangelistic endeavor within the congregations." Thus we see that God has richly blessed the French Mennonites both temporally and spiritually.

In later years the land which became the goal of the Swiss Mennonite emigrants was chiefly the United States of America. Very likely there were Bernese among the very first Mennonite emigrants to Pennsylvania who had come from the Palatinate at the beginning of the seventeenth century. There was a very large emigration of Bernese Mennonites to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The very numerous Mennonite congregations in Pennsylvania are for the most part composed of descendants of Swiss Mennonites from the canton of Berne. The nineteenth century witnessed a large emigration from the Jura and from the Emmental in the third decade. These emigrants settled chiefly in Ohio and in Indiana. The modern congregation near Dalton, Ohio, known as the "Sonnenberg" church, was settled by these people and was long the goal of emigrants from the congregation of the same name in the Bernese Jura. The difficult journey which these people took was accomplished by wagon as far as Havre, and food supplies for the long ocean journey of more than three months were taken along. The stream of emigrants to the New World constantly increased, for many found the struggle for existence in the Swiss mountain lands too difficult. A brief examination of the difficult state of Swiss agriculture in the fifties and the eighties of the last century also helps us to understand the enormous number of the emigrants. Thus the Swiss Mennonites and the American Mennonites have continued to be united by many bonds of relationship.

As we look back over the whole movement of Swiss Mennonite emigration, we are led to feel that Mennonites in all countries are united with each other not only through spiritual ties but also to some extent through the physical ties of blood relationship.

The Swiss Mennonites who remained in the Home Land

Even though a large portion of the Swiss Mennonite people were lost to the native land by the extensive emigration of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, Switzerland, the original home of numerous Mennonite families, still has retained a remnant of Mennonite congregations, who today call themselves "Old Evangelical Anabaptist Congregations" ("Altevangelisch Taufgesinnte Gemeinden"). Here is a list of the congregations.

Basel-Schänzli has its own roomy meeting house since 1903. West of this congregation close to the French border is Grosslützel, which includes in its membership all its scattered families living on the lonely mountain farms as far as Delsberg. The congregation known as Pruntrut, which is located in the northern tip of the Bernese Jura, was founded at the beginning of the century by Elder Heinrich Schmutz. South of this congregation, located about the center of the Bernese Jura, is the congregation known as Kleintal with an additional chapel at Moron which was built in 1893. Another meeting house of this same congregation was built in 1921 at Perceux near the rock cave Geisskirchlein, where according to tradition Mennonites held their services in the time of persecution. One of the largest Swiss Mennonite congregations is located further southwest on the eastern edge of the Jura. It is the congregation known as "Sonnenberg," with the beautiful chapel at Jeangisboden, built in 1900, and the two additional meetinghouses at Fürstenberg and Les Mottes.

Farther to the south, just across from the Chasseral mountain chain, is the congregation known as Mont-Cortebert, and farther west on the high plateau of the Jura is the congregation Chaux d' Abel which uses for its meetings the schoolhouse built by David Ummel and given by him to the congregation (burned down and rebuilt in 1917). A chapel in this community which was built in 1905 belongs to the young people's society which includes Mennonites in its membership. There is only one Mennonite congregation in the canton of Neuf-Chatel, namely Chaux de Fonds, with its chapel in Les Bulles which was built in 1894 outside of the city. The older congregation known as Locle is merged with this congregation. The largest and most scattered Swiss congregation is the congregation in the Emmental with its center at Langnau, where also its organ, the *Zionspilger,* is published. In the village of Kehr

at the edge of Langnau stands the first meetinghouse built by Mennonites in Switzerland, built in 1888. Two additional meetinghouses were built by the congregation in 1899, Bomatt on the Emme river, and Aebnit near Bowil farther west along the railroad from Langnau to Berne. Two affiliated branches have been established, Emmenholz near Solothurn, and Geneva (also called Pays de Chex) which was founded at the beginning of the century by Abraham Geiser.

All these congregations are united in a conference. The spiritual life in these remnants of the old Anabaptist congregations of Switzerland was in a very low state about the middle of the nineteenth century. It is true that the simple, modest, life of the fathers had been maintained long after the time of persecution, but it is a fact that very often there was little spiritual life in spite of a correct external form. The people clung apathetically to the old customs. But gradually revivals came in the scattered congregations. The greatest revival period came about the turn of the century, as a result of which many were awakened from dead formalism to a new life. Unfortunately these periods of spiritual prosperity were followed by periods of decline, so that today frequently much superficiality is found alongside of a living faith, and we must confess that to some extent a falling away from the biblically sound Mennonite principles of church life is noticeable.

May God grant through His grace that the original form of true evangelical church life may develop further in such a way as to bless our congregations and to become a well-spring whose healing waters may make fruitful much waste land so that the fresh breeze of a gospel spring may transform the waste land into blossoming fields where spiritual life may flow unhindered.

May the Holy Spirit revive again our so richly blessed Mennonite congregations to a new comprehension and fulfillment of the practical tasks which lie before us, to the glory of our risen and ascended Christ, the Head of the Church.

THE MENNONITES OF RUSSIA

BENJAMIN H. UNRUH
Karlsruhe, Germany

As we stand before God this day as a world conference our minds go out in sincere love to our ruined and scattered congregations in the East and likewise at the same time to the entire Christendom of that sorely tried land.

It is very difficult for me, in the light of the dark present, to speak about the past of these congregations and colonies. It seems so cold, so academic, when the house is burning on all sides and indeed already lies in ruin and ashes to a large extent. How can we lecture, when the shades of death are all around us. We are all too conscientious, we take too seriously the need in which our brethren are living and also the God who is behind and above that need, to give ourselves to superficiality. We cannot dream and write, we cannot speculate and imagine, we can only trust in God, we want to face our dying friends and brethren in love, as those who hope where there apparently is no hope. If we fail to do this, then we betray and abandon those who are suffering also for our sakes.

At this point my mind goes back to a former pupil who some years ago wrote me from his Siberian exile as follows: "You used to teach us in the class that vicarious representation is a fundamental law of the kingdom of God which reached its deepest fulfillment and highest perfection on Good Friday. I did not understand you altogether then. Now I understand you. It is quite clear to me that we are not here by accident nor altogether for our own sakes alone. We are allowed to travel this hard road for all." These words from my pupil, whom I can still see before me in the class, touched my heart. As I held his letter in my hand with deep emotion and deep joy, our roles were changed, he had become my teacher. Then it dawned upon me how that the experience of our brethren in all these hard years has a deeper meaning, a meaning which we do not read into their experience, but which comes to us from that experience with primeval force and summons us to a great responsibility. And it is concerning this responsibility above everything else that I feel I must speak today.

In this World Conference in which we are celebrating the memory of Menno Simons we find ourselves involved in a deep responsibility in view of the desperate situation in which our brethren find themselves in the East. The moment that we become ready to recognize this responsibility, to assume it in thought and deed, in readiness to help and to sacrifice, then we escape the danger of only making fair words which in themselves help nothing.

At the turn of the nineteenth century our forefathers journeyed eastward into South Russia from the region about Danzig, from West Prussia and East Prussia; and in the middle of the century they traveled farther in smaller groups to eastern Russia. Splendid settlements were established, out of which daughter colonies were created which likewise developed rapidly in a remarkable way. At the turn of the twentieth century German colonies were established in Siberia, among which were also Mennonite colonies. All this was not accomplished without griefs and cares, disappointments, strife and division, tribulations and catastrophes, internal and external decay, sin and guilt, sin against God and the brother,—but by and large the story is one of progress in all fields, material, cultural, and spiritual. For me this remarkable chapter concerning the history of the Mennonite colonies in the empire of the Czars, always finds its setting in the frame of the history of our whole brotherhood, in connection with Switzerland, and with this land whose hospitality the congress is enjoying, with the German regions and with America. Just now I am giving special attention in my studies to the history of the Swiss and Dutch Mennonites as well as to the Mennonites of upper and lower Germany, and as I do so it is becoming clearer to me that the Russian chapter of our Mennonite history has a special significance. The thing that stands out the most in this great colonization movement in the East is the fact which was already commented upon in the second number of the *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* in 1862, namely that the church community in Russia was enabled to create along with its religious life a culture-community which put into practice many of the ideas which were early found in the mind of such leaders as Conrad Grebel. The Swiss brethren in Zurich were men of caliber, men who wanted to accomplish great things in matters of faith as well as in genuine love to humanity. Dr. H. S. Bender has demonstrated this recently in his dissertation at Heidelberg, as has also been done by the history

which the Swiss brethren have recently published. The Swiss Anabaptists as well as the Germans and the Hollanders were ethical activists in spite of the spirit of patient suffering which is also a product of the gospel. The age was not ready for their ideas, they had to suffer and die, to be martyrs and wanderers in many lands, strangers, robbed of their rights everywhere. Just as the Swiss and upper German brethren suffered, so did the Anabaptists in Holland, for they lived in a land in which the cultural and political fate of western Europe was decided by the effective resistance to the threatening Spanish world empire of which Philip II dreamed, a resistance which was offered by the splendid citizens of this land which was already at that time far advanced in its cultural and economic life. Our brethren in the Netherlands who had their stomachs so bitterly full of oppression and bloodshed in the century-long struggles for home and freedom, whether it was in the native Frisian territory or in connection with the Münsterite catastrophe, or in the errors of the Inquisition, or in the wars of religion,—they realized what William of Orange was to mean and they supported him in attitude and in deed.

How deep the tribulation which we Mennonites have shared in our common past, what a ceaseless struggle for the barest right to exist and to establish the simplest standard of living, and to maintain home and faith! In northeast Germany, in Polish and Ducal-Prussia, where the early colonists gathered from everywhere, (as was also the case in the sixteenth century in East Friesland), there also our forefathers suffered until a great statesman, Frederick the Great, put his protecting hand over them, seeing their moral and economic qualities and realizing that this group of colonists were really not parasites (as Dr. Quiring has also demonstrated in regard to the Mennonite pioneer colonies in the Chaco in his excellent book which was recently published by H. Schneider in Karlsruhe). Frederick the Great recognized the great value of these people for the state, as he also did with the other evangelical refugees who came thither. Catherine I and Alexander I of Russia likewise realized the value of the Dutch—Low German colonists. And so this notable chapter entitled, "Mennonites in Russia," came to be written in our not altogether uninteresting and unimportant history. This Russian Mennonitism could not have amounted to anything however without its background, without its Swiss, upper German,

Dutch, and Prussian ancestors. It was derived out of a family with tradition, out of a family in which the Gospel and the spirit of Christ had their proper place, out of an evolution in which virtue, common sense, family life, work and discipline had been thoroughly tested.

Not all of those who went to Russia were sound, just as not all of those who came out of Russia have been sound. There is much in this respect which we cannot think of without shame, much that took place at the beginning of our Russian history and then again and again later on, whether within the villages, or between the congregations, between rich and poor, between master and servant, in the midst of loaded tables and filled barns. But in spite of it all, again and again conscience awoke and spoke its irresistible "no". In church and in civil life, in village and in district meetings, on the streets and from the roofs, conscience shouted its message to the church and to the civil community, lest piety and virtue and reason (should) be permanently damaged. And again and again a new leaf was turned, repentance and conversion of life was brought about, if not in every heart at least in many. And so there developed a social and religious life which in spite of all its guilt and neglect, in spite of all its shortcomings and failures, in spite of all its perversions and deformities, nevertheless in its ultimate character was anchored in the eternal things. The eternal things were held fast by the conscientious men and women, the able elders and teachers, the responsible men of the community and of the civil administration, the faithful fathers and mothers, all of whom exercised fear of God and trust in Him, and who practice love to Christ and to the neighbor.

We all know the story of how the simple huts of pioneer days developed into the friendly and spacious dwellings of later times, how the many neat villages were almost "hidden away" in the midst of their gardens, how agriculture was added to stock raising, how Johann Cornies with his vision and strictness, with a steel-hard sense of duty, developed all branches of economic life, how he promoted schools, a school system which developed from the elementary school up to the teachers college. We all know the story of how handicraft and industry developed, how a multitude of charitable institutions were built, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, a splendidly equipped insane asylum, institutions which have brought kind and healing ministrations to hundreds and thousands

of German colonists of all confessions as well as to those who were not German.

Then came the crash from the heights. World war and civil war, revolution and famine, pestilence, persecution—their name is legion, all these things were discussed at length in the 1930 Mennonite World Relief Conference in Danzig in the light of the radical socializing policy which was being introduced at that time. Since then the plunge has gone further into the depths. I do not wish to give a political address here just now, but we must make it plain that the economic as well as the religious need in Russia is tremendous. The churches have been destroyed or have been confiscated for other purposes. The bishops and preachers are scattered and in exile. Instruction in the Gospel is impossible, the Sunday is desecrated, religious festivals are forbidden. For a time we were very thankful that we had the privilege of giving the hungry and needy a piece of bread by means of the Torgsin stores which operated quite effectively on the whole. But this avenue of aid has been closed for some time. The Soviet Union has introduced a new evaluation for the ruble which has increased the cost of relief very much and which has correspondingly limited the possibilities of help. Hence most of those who are suffering will have to depend upon themselves if no new way is discovered to help them.

But there is another need which is much greater than the physical need which has repeatedly arisen, especially in the year 1933-1934 when the famine took so many victims, and that is the need in the field of religious, spiritual and cultural life. In Danzig in 1930 we reminded ourselves of the ancient Mennonite principle of freedom of conscience. We attempted to convince Moscow of the necessity of granting this freedom, and we appealed to the conscience of the world, but all has been in vain. We are not called to be advisers to the God of the universe, we must only wait on Him in intercession. But we want to wait actively, ready to struggle and to sacrifice.

Today I should like to take this opportunity to thank in the name of our congregations in the Russian homeland the committees in every land, their chairmen and members, all the congregations and the individual workers and givers, for the great work of brotherly love, which has blessed our suffering brethren in Russia, our refugees who have come out of Russia, our emigrants and immi-

grants. The great work which has been done has borne much fruit and will yet bear much fruit. You, my brethren, have all harvested some ingratitude for your labors. May I beg forgiveness of you and your congregations where such has occurred. I know that you will be able to discriminate between the good-will which characterizes the most of us and the failures and shortcomings which have occurred. You will remember the great temptation in which our people in Russia have constantly stood since the outbreak of the World War.

May I also just now call to mind the great and faithful work of those men who since 1920 and before for these long years have labored in the face of unheard of difficulties. I think also of the labor of the "Studienkommission." I mention no names. Everyone knows who they are, the men in Russia and in Europe and across the sea who have given themselves to this great work.* I wish to thank also the various governments, in particular the German government and "Brüder in Not" who are represented here in the person of our honored guest Dr. Kundt.

We must ask ourselves the question here at this world conference whether we have grown weary of well-doing or whether we can still continue to help according to our strength. A remarkable work has been done by our united brotherhood. Without violating truth and candor I dare to say that in reality more has been done by our congregations in every land than any one had the right to ask of them. But our responsibility cannot be suspended. The call comes to us from God and from our brethren. Therefore let us labor on with a heart that cares, that loves, that prays, with a hand that gives and labors, with a mind that thinks, that considers, that plans, with a tongue that awakens and gives thanks, with our entire personality in its attitude toward eternal things, an attitude that counts as small that which is small and as great that which is great, a personality which is not lost in its own insignificant ego but which is ready to live for the great God and for the dying brother.

It was not possible for me today, in the light of the responsibility which is upon me, to give you an academic lecture about the past, the present, and the future of the Mennonites in Russia.

* In Elspeet Professor Unruh mentioned the names of B. B. Janz, C. F. Klassen, A. A. Friesen and a large number of European and American workers, among them D. Toews, S. H. N. Gorter, and H. S. Bender. (Footnote by the author.)

There are other places for such a lecture. What I wanted to do for us all was to impress anew the responsibility which is ours, so that the delegates who are here may return to their homes to awaken our people anew to their duties. What will come of it all or what can come of it all, that is in God's hand. Of us it is required that we be ready. And we are all ready, just as Menno was ready and as all our forefathers always have wanted to be ready.

THE MENNONITES OF THE UNITED STATES

Harold S. Bender

Goshen, Indiana

Introduction

It was in 1497, forty years before Menno Simons renounced the papacy and cast his lot with our brotherhood, that a resident of modern Europe first cast eyes upon the mainland of North America, but it was not until 1607, almost fifty years after Menno's death, that the first permanent settlement was made. With this settlement begins the history of that great Anglo-Saxon community in the western Hemisphere which after almost two centuries of existence as a British colony became the United States of America. I have used the term "Anglo-Saxon" deliberately for it is well to remember that in spite of the contribution of large groups of non-English settlers, the basic culture and political and social ideals of the new world early became fixed in terms of the culture of England, and that the United States has remained to this day a portion of the world-wide Anglo-Saxon cultural community. The various continental language and culture groups which were established along side the basic English community were all assimilated. The Mennonite groups, all of which were non-English, practically all of them Teutonic in culture, were likewise assimilated or are being assimilated into the American-English culture of the nation and have to a large extent broken the bonds between them and their brethren in the old world. Thus, the American delegates who are in attendance upon this congress in the homeland of Menno Simon, though they are closely related by ties of blood and history and faith to the Mennonites of Europe, nevertheless represent a definitely "new world" Mennonitism of a character in some respects substantially different from that represented by their brethren from the continent of Europe.

Before characterizing in detail modern American Mennonitism with its many sub-divisions and its highly active life, it is important to trace briefly the history of the migration from Europe of the forefathers of present-day American Mennonites and the estab-

lishment of the far-flung series of Mennonite communities over the breadth of the land from Philadelphia in the east to 3,000 mile distant Los Angeles in the west.

The history of Mennonite migrations to America and within America is a most interesting, and to some extent a most intricate one. Perhaps some of you who are here today think of the American Mennonites as a great homogeneous group with a common ancestry and a common spiritual history; or perhaps others knowing something of the many branches and divisions among the American Mennonites, are inclined to think of a strange perversity or stubbornness of character by which an originally homogeneous group has gradually been broken up into diverse and quarreling elements. Both conceptions are incorrect. In reality, the history of American Mennonitism is the story of a gradual but constantly more effective growing together both in spirit and in organization of many highly diversified groups with widely differing European backgrounds. In fact the most important key to the understanding of modern American Mennonitism is a thorough knowledge of Mennonite migration, from the first permanent settlement near Philadelphia made by lower Rhine German Mennonites of Dutch ancestry and background in the late seventeenth century, to the great migration from South Russia to the prairies of the Middle West sixty years ago.

What a remarkable and almost never-ending stream of immigrants we view as we look across the almost three centuries that have elapsed since the first Mennonite set his foot upon the shores of America. Let us take a close look at the more than 25,000 souls who came in these years, the progenitors of the more than 200,000 souls who now bear the name of Menno within the bounds of the United States.

The Dutch Contribution

The first Mennonites in America were Dutch merchants and traders, with possibly a few farmers among them, who came to the region of New York very early in the history of the Dutch colony of the New Netherlands. As early as 1643 "Menonists" were found among the settlers of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island in what is now the great metropolis of New York City, and a few years later some were to be found in a settlement on Long Island,

known as Gravesend. Apparently no great number came, for they left no permanent trace of their religion in this continent. One is tempted to speculate what might have happened if thousands of Dutch Mennonite settlers had come to America. As it was, American Mennonitism became German and not Dutch. It is true that some twenty-five Dutch Mennonite families sailed from Rotterdam in May, 1663, to establish a semi-communistic settlement on the banks of the Delaware under the leadership of that strange visionary social reformer of Zierik Zee, Cornelius Peter Plockhoy, a son of Mennonite parents. However it was but a scant two years until English warships laid waste "to a very nail" the struggling little settlement, and ruined Plockhoy's dream. After that, at the most a half-dozen families came direct from Holland to America, until recent times. There was Dirck Keyser, the silk merchant of Amsterdam, who came to Germantown in 1688, whose only son became a Dunkard in 1719. And there was William Rittenhouse, the papermaker, first Mennonite preacher in America, who though born at Broich, near Mülheim on the Ruhr, had become a citizen of Amsterdam in 1678, and ten years later, in 1688 joined Dirck Keyser in Germantown. His blood still flows in the veins of many a Mennonite in America, and many a descendant served the church as minister. Not until 1853 did more Mennonites from Holland come to America, this time from Balk in Friesland, to settle in Northern Indiana within a scant ten kilometers of my home. They were the last of the Dutch non-resistants in those days, leaving the homeland for conscience' sake and the gospel's sake. Some of their descendants are still with us.

However, even though the early Dutch families in Pennsylvania were few, most of the Mennonite settlers in Germantown in the first twenty-five years of American Mennonite history from 1683 to 1707, should be reckoned to the Dutch Mennonite group, for they were families from the Lower Rhine, from Crefeld, Mülheim on the Ruhr, Goch, and neighboring places, mostly of Dutch ancestry and Dutch language. Perhaps twenty-five families belong to this group, fifteen from Crefeld alone, although not more than three of the famous first thirteen Crefeld families in Germantown were Mennonites, the remainder being Quakers.

The permanent contribution of these early Dutch-Lower Rhine families was very slight, even though the language in the German-

town Mennonite church was Dutch exclusively for the first twenty-five years and traces of Dutch terms such as "vergadering" were to be found a generation later in Eastern Pennsylvania. The greatest influence was probably exerted through Jacob Gottschalk, from Goch, who in his long term as minister (over sixty years) and as the first bishop in America (over fifty years) certainly brought something of the spirit of his Lower Rhine homeland into Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonitism where it has remained to this day. It was he and William Rittenhouse also who in the years 1707 and 1708 first established the connection between the Mennonites of Pennsylvania and Holland by correspondence with the church in Amsterdam, which was to be kept alive for more than fifty years, only to lapse permanently thereafter. It should also be remembered here that it was Amsterdam Mennonites who printed in 1712 for Jacob Gottschalk and his poverty-stricken church the first Mennonite book in English, a translation of the confession of faith adopted at Dordrecht in 1632. And it was that greatest of all Mennonite books, the Dutch Martyrs' Mirror of Tieleman van Braght, which was translated into German by Pennsylvania Mennonites and published by them in 1748 at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in spite of the failure of the Amsterdam brethren to give aid in this project by which the leaders hoped to fortify the non-resistant faith of the brotherhood in America in face of the growing menace of war.

The Palatinate-Swiss Contribution

Dutch Mennonitism contributed in a different but more important way to the establishment of our brotherhood on the shores of the new world, namely through aiding the bitterly persecuted Swiss and Palatinate Mennonites to come to Pennsylvania in the fifty years from 1710 to 1760. This Swiss-Palatinate migration is exceedingly important, for without it there is reason to doubt whether the early Dutch-Lower Rhine settlement at Germantown would have been able to survive. Through it American Mennonitism has to a large extent become what it is both in numbers and in character. The Mennonitism of America is today largely Swiss-South German, except for the large block of more recent arrivals from Russia. And without the powerful aid of the strong Mennonite communities of Holland, who not only intervened effectively politically through the States-General, but also subsidized with

money the migration of many Mennonite families to Pennsylvania through funds provided by the Committee for Foreign Needs, it is doubtful whether any large Mennonite settlement would ever have been established in America. Professor Kühler has described this aid more in detail in his address at the 1930 Danzig conference.

Apart from the six families from Hamburg-Altona who settled in Germantown in 1700, some to leave soon after, the stream of German Mennonite migration to America was exclusively from the Palatinate and Switzerland until after the Franco-Prussian war, with very few isolated exceptions such as the van der Smissen family from Friedrichstadt. The first settlers who came from Wolfsheim in 1707 felt themselves so different from the Dutch speaking congregation at Germantown that they kept to themselves for a whole year before they finally united with the congregation in 1708. The little rivulet of immigrants from the Palatinate gradually widened into a considerable stream in the following decades. At about the same time, nine Swiss families, with aged Bishop Hans Herr as their leader, found their way from bloody Berne to peaceful Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, about one hundred kilometers west of Germantown, to establish in 1710 what was to be the largest and most prosperous single Mennonite settlement in America. There today over 20,000 Mennonites worship every Sunday in one hundred meetinghouses in an area of not more than sixty kilometers in diameter. For the two generations following 1710, hundreds of Mennonite families from Switzerland and the Palatinate poured into the two settlements of Germantown (Skippack) and Lancaster, until by the time the wars of 1754-63 and 1775-1783 put a stop to the stream, at least 5,000 souls must have come across the ocean. Included in this number were a small group of Amish families who settled in the region of eastern Lancaster County about 1740.

In their new home the harried and persecuted Mennonites of middle Europe at last found what they had been denied by their persecuting Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed neighbors of Switzerland and South Germany: freedom of conscience, and peace and prosperity. Here under the benign and peaceful rule of William Penn, the Quaker who believed that the principles of Jesus should be applied in human society including government, our fathers found and enjoyed what the rulers of Europe, always excepting the land of the liberal and progressive House of Orange, were not willing

to grant until after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, full recognition as human beings to be treated as of equal value in the sight of Almighty God and equally entitled to the full and free practice of their faith. The grateful memory of the abundant freedom enjoyed by the Mennonites of America in their new home in the new world has always made them deeply loyal to their land, and accounts for the ease and willingness with which they broke the ties of blood and race and soil which might otherwise have been so hard to break. For them religious faith transcended, and still transcends all merely human ties. "Blood and soil" are not the ultimates. They gladly "suffered the despoiling of their goods," and when they were persecuted in one city or land, fled to another, remembering always that "we have no abiding city here but seek one which is to come, an heavenly." It is no doubt in part due to this early tradition which brought our forefathers to America, that the ties of contemporary political and community relationship as well as those of historical tradition, have never sat so heavily upon our shoulders. This probably also accounts for the stronger emphasis among us upon the heavenly citizenship rather than upon the earthly, although certainly other factors have played an important part also in the creation of this attitude.

After the Napoleonic wars, the economic stress of the time led to a renewed migration from Switzerland and the Palatinate to America, this time to the newer country of Ohio and Indiana across the mountains, since Pennsylvania no longer had room for settlers. However the stream of immigrants this time was not so large. After the Civil War in the United States, 1861 to 1865, a few scattered families and individuals continued to cross the ocean but the number has been small.

The second large stream of German migration to America was the Amish migration from Alsace-Lorraine, Montbeliard, Bavaria, Hesse, and the Saar, which set in after the close of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 and continued until the Civil War in America in 1861, with a few scattered families since that time. This remarkable emigration almost depopulated the Amish communities of Europe in the course of two generations, 1815-1860, and established numerous large settlements, in western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Ontario, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and other states. These settlements today total more than 20,000 baptized members, with probably more than

35,000 souls, ten times the Amish population of Europe. These new Amish settlements in America kept themselves aloof from the older Mennonite settlements for many years, and only recently have joined hands with them.

The Prussian-Russian Contribution

The third great wave of German Mennonite migration from Europe to America was that occasioned by the attempt of the Czar of Russia in 1870-1880 to russify the large Mennonite colonies of South Russia and to deprive them of their freedom from military service and other privileges which had been promised to them as eternal rights by Empress Catharine the Great in the eighteenth century and her successor Alexander in the early nineteenth century. Before the necessary concessions were made by the Russian government, and in spite of the compromise on the question of service to the state and partly because of it, some twelve thousand Mennonites left Russia in the years 1873-1880 and settled in the prairies of Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota, Minnesota, and Manitoba, almost half of them in the United States. At about the same time a number of families left the Mennonite settlements around Danzig and Elbing in eastern Prussia because of the decision of the Prussian government to cancel the ancient Mennonite privilege of freedom from military service. They settled with the Russian settlers in Kansas.

The sixty years which have passed since the first arrival in America of the Russian and Prussian Mennonites have seen them grow into numerous large and prosperous communities with over 40,000 souls in number in the United States, probably more than five times the number who originally came to America. The large migration from Russia after the world war which took 20,000 Mennonites from Russia to North America in the years 1922-1927, as well as the smaller migration of 1930, does not concern us because with very few exceptions this entire movement went to Canada, immigration to the United States having been very greatly restricted. In fact the immigration laws of the United States are now so strict as practically to prohibit all European migration to America for permanent settlement. It is therefore highly improbable that any further Mennonite migration to the United States will ever occur.

Later Relations of the Three Largest Immigrant Groups

A brief review of what has been said about the migration to America will soon convince my hearers that my earlier remark about the cause of the lack of unity among the American Mennonites is true. The eighteenth century Swiss-Palatinate immigrants have maintained a high degree of unity among themselves, except for the Amish versus Mennonite division which had occurred in Switzerland and Alsace, 1693-1697. They came over at much the same time from a common background in Europe. Since they lived in much the same common background in America they were able to maintain unity and fellowship and have had a common development to the present time.

The Swiss-Palatinate immigrants of the 19th century however could not find a common basis of fellowship and unity with the earlier settlers, for the century of historical evolution between the two waves of migration had taken them different ways in Europe and America so that, although they had common forefathers in the homeland in Europe, in America they found themselves too far apart to be brethren.

The second great wave of immigrants, the Amish of the post-Napoleonic period, likewise found themselves unable to fellowship with the older or the newer Swiss-Palatinate Mennonites of Pennsylvania and Ohio and the west. They attempted for a time to fellowship with the few Amish who had come to Pennsylvania in the previous century but the result was only strife, with a final division between the conservative "old order" elements and the more progressive general body. But gradually they drew nearer to the older Swiss-Palatinate Mennonites until in the first three decades of the twentieth century they have at last completely united with them, wiping out the distinction between "Amish" and "Mennonite." This is one of the noteworthy developments of American Mennonite history, one that has just been completed in the past few years. It has meant the merging of the two largest and oldest groups of Mennonites in America into a united body with over 50,000 baptized members, and probably almost 100,000 souls. It means also the union of the great mass of the Swiss Mennonite type in America. The unity has very likely been possible because of the fact that both Amish and Mennonite were originally Swiss-South German in type before the split.

The third immigrant wave, the Russian-Prussian group of 1873-1880 apparently found no basis for fellowship with the earlier Swiss-Palatinate Mennonite or Amish groups. No doubt this was due in part to the fact that they represent the other major type of Mennonites, the Dutch-North German type, which has certain characteristics not found among the Swiss-South German. But it was probably also due to two additional reasons: first, because of the differing cultural background, Low Dutch-North German-Prussian over against the Swiss-South German; and second, because of the differing historical evolution of the Russian Mennonites as compared to the American Mennonites. For one thing the American Mennonites were already partially assimilated to the American-English culture with its language and school system, whereas the newer Russian immigrants were staunchly German and intended to remain German. Consequently this block of some 20,000 Russian Mennonites on the western prairies has not merged with the older Mennonite elements, but has more or less maintained a separate identity, even though it is today losing its German culture and being rapidly assimilated into our common American-English culture.

Westward Migration-Pioneers

But the story of Mennonite migrations and Mennonite diversity is not yet told. The great westward migration of the Mennonites within America also has had significance, though chiefly for the original Pennsylvania Mennonites. In general this migration westward was not a peculiarly Mennonite affair but was essentially a part of that remarkable migration, known as "the westward movement," by which the tremendously large and fertile region between the eastern Appalachian Mountains and the western Rocky Mountains, was populated between 1800 and 1900. This migration was two-fold; first of all it was a movement of population from the crowded eastern regions to the open west; and second, it was a wholesale settlement of German and Scandinavian immigrants from overseas. Since many Mennonite farmers lived in the crowded counties of Eastern Pennsylvania, hundreds of them joined the westward movement in 1800-1860 to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Ontario. After the Civil War the migrants went to Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and farther west to the coast. The newly arrived Mennonite and Amish immigrants from overseas also found

their way to the same open regions of the west. The Russian Mennonites of 1873-1880 came just in time to occupy large tracts of virgin territory in the western prairies. Today by far the larger part of all American Mennonites live in the "Middle West", this great region which was settled for the first time in the 19th century. Many Mennonites of today can still remember hearing their grandfathers tell of the pioneer days when they first helped to tame the virgin wilderness and carved for themselves and their descendants homesteads out of land never before cultivated by man, land occupied by Indians and wild animals. Half of the "old" Mennonite group today lives west of the Pennsylvania mountains in land which it has occupied scarcely a century, whereas all of the Russian Mennonite group live on land occupied only a scant sixty years.

The fact that two thirds of modern American Mennonites are the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of pioneers who lived on the frontier is not without vital significance in understanding American Mennonites of today. Even the older settlements were also pioneer settlements on the frontier when they were first established not more than two hundred years ago. The influence of the frontier on American culture in general has long been recognized. It has also had its influence on American Mennonitism. It has served to fix a deep-seated democracy and a spirit of individualism which was already inherent in Mennonitism at the very beginning, but it has also helped to transform the American Mennonite into a much more aggressive and active type than his European cousin. It has possibly also had the disadvantage of keeping him culturally on a lower level than the European Mennonite who has for the most part lived in the heart of civilization and culture rather than on the frontier.

Schisms

In order to give a true picture of American Mennonitism, I must pause here before giving the final characterization of present day Mennonitism, to speak about the divisions which have occurred to break the unity of already established groups. I do so regretfully because the harm caused to the cause of Christ by these divisions is more clear perhaps to us today than to any one else.

We Americans of course are not responsible for the divisions which occurred in Europe and which were imported into this country. As a matter of fact our major divisions are all European in

origin; compared to these, the divisions which occurred in America are for the most part minor in character. In the class of schisms originating in Europe belong the Amish division of 1693-1697 in Switzerland, and the Brüdergemeinde division of 1860 in Russia. No divisions have occurred among the Russian group since their arrival in America.

The Amish group in America has suffered one major division, that of the "old order" branch about 1850-1860, and two minor divisions in 1866 (Defenceless Conference) and 1876 (Central Conference). The "old" Mennonite body, composed of the Swiss-Palatinate group of the eighteenth century immigration has suffered three noteworthy divisions, one in Eastern Pennsylvania in 1847 (Oberholtzer group), and two about 1870-1880 (the Wisler "Old Order" group, and the Brenneman group, Mennonite Brethren in Christ), besides several insignificant ones. Thus altogether six significant divisions have occurred in the older Mennonite group in America, with an equal number of insignificant ones. In general it can be said that the divisions were to the left and the right of the center and about equally distributed. In some cases conservative groups split off from the main body, and in other cases progressive groups did so. In no case was a theological issue of major importance involved. Usually the dispute concerned methods of church work such as the use of the English language, methods of evangelism, Sunday Schools, and similar points, or the question of strict versus lax discipline which has plagued the Mennonite Church throughout its history. Among the Amish the question of the application of shunning in connection with excommunication has been a frequent source of contention.

It is clear from the above that those who speak disparagingly of the eighteen to twenty-five divisions among the Mennonites of America and seek to malign the character of American Mennonitism thereby, do so because of ignorance of the true history of American Mennonitism; for most of the major divisions among the American Mennonites are of European origin, and other apparent divisions are not divisions at all but are simply the result of groups of differing historical and geographical backgrounds in Europe failing to amalgamate in America. Furthermore, there has been as much drawing together as there has been going apart. Witness the great union of the older Mennonite and Amish groups to constitute the

large "old" Mennonite church. Witness also the drawing together of the Oberholtzer schism from the "old" Mennonites of Eastern Pennsylvania which occurred in 1847 with the Swiss-Palatinate immigration of the 19th century and the main body of the Russian Mennonite group to constitute the large General Conference of Mennonites of North America, the second largest group in North America. On the whole we dare say that the forces of union have been far stronger than the forces of disunion.

At the present time the six chief Mennonite bodies or branches of the United States are the following:

The "Old" Mennonite Church	50,000 members
The General Conference Mennonites of North America	25,000 "
The Old Order Amish Mennonites	9,000 "
The Mennonite Brethren Church	7,000 "
The Mennonite Brethren in Christ	7,000 "
The Central Conference	3,000 "

All figures include only membership in the United States of America. All the other groups have fewer than 2,000 baptized members.

General Characterization

In spite of the considerable diversity among the American Mennonites, they nevertheless have certain common outstanding characteristics.

(1) *Theology and Piety.* All the American Mennonite groups without exception stand upon a platform of conservative evangelicalism in theology, being thoroughly orthodox in the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith such as the unity of the Godhead, the true deity of Christ, the atonement by the shedding of blood, the plenary inspiration and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures as the word of God. Neither the eighteenth century rationalistic moralism of the Enlightenment, nor the modern religious liberalism of the nineteenth century, has had any significant effect upon their thinking, in spite of the fact that individuals here and there have adopted unorthodox views. In fact most Mennonites have viewed with sympathy, if not sharing in active participation, in the great reaction against modernism in America known as the fundamentalist movement.

On the whole the Mennonites of America have held steadfastly to the simple biblical faith of their Mennonite forefathers in Europe as it was two and three centuries ago. This faith has five outstanding emphases: (1) the divine authority and adequacy of the word of God, (2) the necessity of a holy life in obedience to that word, (3) the high calling and place of the church as distinct from the state, (4) separation between the church and the "world," and (5) the abandonment of all carnal warfare and force and the actual practice of the gospel of love and peace.

Although American Mennonites have not laid much weight on creeds and confessions two Mennonite confessions have been widely used. The General Conference of North America has adopted the Cornelis Ris confession of 1767; and practically all the other groups, particularly the "old" Mennonites, have adopted the Eighteen Articles of Dordrecht of 1632. Most of the Mennonites of America still practice the ordinance of feet washing (John 13), and the majority, in particular the "old" Mennonites, the ordinance of the devotional prayer-head covering for women engaged in worship (I Corinthians 11). All have maintained the doctrine of non-resistance and peace in spite of severe tests in several wars. Most of the churches, perhaps ninety per cent, still have unsalaried preachers, and maintain a simple, warm church life in which much emphasis is laid upon participation by the entire membership in the life and activity of the church. Practically the entire membership of the churches attends the regular Sunday services of worship.

On the whole, American Mennonitism has developed in the direction of what one might call a pietistic type of theology and religious life, with emphasis upon conversion and the personal experience of religion accompanied by a warm religious tone. In some groups this has tended strongly in the direction of a Methodistic emotionalism. German pietism has exerted its influence through early contacts in the Palatinate and also through books. Johann Arndt's *Wahres Christentum,* as well as some of Tersteegen's writings were widely read in earlier days. Earlier American Methodism and several more recent revivalistic movements, such as that of the noted evangelist D. L. Moody, and the more recently established so-called Bible Institutes and Bible Schools, have had a pronounced influence.

(2) *Activities and methods of work.* The pietistic influences mentioned above, together with the influence of American Protestantism in general, has molded American Mennonitism on the whole into an active aggressive movement with a great deal of practical activity. This is particularly noticeable to Europeans who are inclined to be critical about American "activism." Typical English and American methods of work, such as Sunday Schools, young people's meetings and associations, evangelistic activities, lay societies for women and men, and similar procedures, have been widely if not universally adopted since the middle of the nineteenth century by all except the most conservative groups. At the same time the missionary interest in both home missions and foreign missions has developed rapidly in the past fifty years, until today American Mennonites support approximately two hundred and fifty foreign missionaries in China, India, Africa, and Argentina, and conduct over one hundred missions in the leading cities. Likewise organized charity has had a notable development. Today American Mennonites operate eleven hospitals, five orphans' homes, nine homes for the aged, two deaconess homes, and other institutions. Through influences from Germany, deaconess work has been introduced into the Russian Mennonite groups. However, mere enumeration of institutions cannot give an adequate picture of the extensive practical and charitable work which is supported with so much devotion by so many people, and which is proving to be an increasing blessing for our congregations.

(3) *Publication.* A remarkable activity in publication has developed in almost all American Mennonite groups since the day when John H. Oberholtzer began the publication of the first Mennonite Church periodical in 1852. Today almost every branch has one or more weekly periodicals, and several large publishing houses have been established. The most widely read periodical, the *Gospel Herald,* has a circulation of over 12,000 weekly.

(4) *Education.* Another interesting feature of American Mennonitism is the development of its own denominational schools and colleges. In 1867 the first Mennonite school in America was established at Wadsworth, Ohio, by the General Conference Mennonite group, with the primary purpose of training preachers and missionaries. Although the school was compelled to close within a few years, the conviction that denominational schools were neces-

sary for Mennonite young people has led to the establishment of numerous secondary and higher schools. At the present time three four-year colleges have been in operation for an average of forty years, with a present combined enrollment of approximately 800 students. In addition there are three two-year colleges with an additional 200 students, and at least ten intermediate or so-called "High Schools." A few years ago a theological seminary known as Witmarsum Seminary was established which provided a course of training for ministers on the same level as the university theological schools. Due to lack of support the institution died after a few years. At present attempts are being made to establish a new theological seminary on a different basis.

Conclusion

It will not be profitable to make comparisons between the Mennonites of America and those of other lands. We have much to learn from you and we hope that we may have something to give to others. But we are profoundly grateful that our Heavenly Father's providence through the course of the history of the past two centuries has placed us in such a goodly land with free and progressive institutions where we have had an almost unparalleled opportunity with perfect freedom of conscience, unhampered by the attitudes and activities of a state church, to unfold the content of our Mennonite heritage and to develop whatever genius there may be in our Mennonite people. As we look back over four hundred years of history we are convinced that God has preserved our Mennonite brotherhood for a purpose, and as I know American Mennonites, I am convinced that they are in general possessed of a deep desire to fulfil this purpose, to know the will of God, and to do it in full obedience to His Word. We have a spiritual heritage that is needed in this modern age. Only if we are true to this heritage and to God's call have we a right to a continued existence. God grant that we and you may be true.

THE MENNONITES OF CANADA

David Toews

Rosthern, Saskatchewan

The Mennonite Settlements in Ontario

As a result of the Peace of Paris which was established in 1783, the independence of the United States from England was recognized. In a few years, in 1788, the first Mennonite families migrated from Pennsylvania to upper Canada, now known as Ontario. But the period of extensive colonization did not begin until 1799.

The reasons for this migration to Canada were various. Swiss and South German Mennonites had come to Pennsylvania in the early part of the eighteenth century. Under the English government they had been free from military service and from all persecution. During the Revolutionary War they had remained neutral, taking no sides either for the English government or for the colonies. They sympathized indeed with the English government but they did not manifest their sympathy openly. Since they fought for neither party they were disliked by both. They suffered much unpleasantness at the hands of the new republican government. When the war was over they still preferred to live under a government which had permitted for over a hundred years full freedom of faith. For these reasons, and also for the further reason that land in Pennsylvania had become relatively expensive whereas good land could be purchased in Canada for a very modest price, a considerable number of Mennonite families decided to go to Ontario, Canada.

The new settlers located chiefly in three counties, Niagara, York, and Waterloo. The long journey from Pennsylvania to Ontario was made either on foot or on horseback. The route went over mountains and through streams, and often the goods had to be carried by hand before the wagons, the so-called Conestoga wagons, could be ferried over the rivers or hauled over the mountains. Upon arrival at the destination, the first task was to clear a small stretch of forest and build a log cabin. The settlers who came to Waterloo country fell into the hands of a conscienceless land agent by the name of Beasley who sold them land which was heavily mortgaged. This was accidentally discovered and the colony came into

great danger. But by the help of brethren in Pennsylvania the difficulty was finally overcome. Churches and schools were built everywhere where these people came. The language in those pioneer days was German, "Pennsylvania-German." The religious services were held in the German language after the same fashion which had been customary in Pennsylvania and which had been brought across the ocean from Switzerland and South Germany. So far as is known the first conference of Mennonites in Ontario was organized in about the year 1820.

About the middle of the nineteenth century divisive movements arose in the Ontario congregations. Some of the preachers vigorously promoted prayer meetings, and soon friction arose between these and the more conservative part of the church. The church was not opposed to prayer meetings as such if they were conducted in the right spirit, but objections were taken to the form and manner in which the zealots fought against the conservative portion of the church. For instance the progressives called themselves the praying part of the church and denominated the conservatives as the prayerless part. The progressive faction, originally perhaps four to five hundred in number, broke off about 1875 and ultimately united with other groups to form in 1883 a body known as "The Mennonite Brethren in Christ."

Somewhat later the language problem became acute. A conservative part of the church insisted on holding to the German while others held that the English language should also be used in the services. As a consequence of the strife on this question and on such questions as Sunday Schools, the most conservative portion of the church broke off, and has been called "Old Order Mennonites." This group has forbidden the use of the telephone and the automobile and is also opposed to Sunday Schools. The larger portion of the church however, has been progressive, has endeavored to stimulate spiritual life, has established Sunday Schools, young people's work, and other similar activities. It also uses the English language in services, and has permitted the use of modern inventions as they have appeared.

The Amish Mennonite group in Ontario was established by immigrants who came direct from Germany in the period from 1824 to 1860. There is very little difference between this group and the

Mennonite church in Ontario except that they are somewhat more strict in certain points. The first Amish Mennonite Conference was organized in the year 1918.

At the present time there are in Ontario seven groups of Mennonites all of whom are very much alike in their confession of faith, but who differ in the interpretation and application of various points. All of these groups emphasize the simple life and simple forms of dress.

The Mennonite Settlements in Western Canada

The first Mennonite settlers in western Canada came from Russia in the year 1874. The Russian government of Alexander II wanted to cancel the privileges which Catherine the Great had given the Mennonites and which had included the guarantee of permanent freedom from military service. Ultimately, under pressure, Russia modified her stand and agreed to accept non-military service in the forests as a substitute for military service. Nevertheless many Mennonites decided to emigrate to America, and the Canadian government sent a representative to Russia, W. Hespeler, to invite the Mennonites to come to Canada.

A delegation of twelve persons was sent across the ocean to investigate the new world with a view to selecting good locations for settlement. Most of the delegates preferred the United States, but a portion, namely the more conservative group, preferred Canada because the Canadian government, through an Order-in-Council issued in 1873, guaranteed complete freedom from military service. The first immigrants came from Russia to Canada in 1874. The number of settlers reached the total of 7,741 souls. They brought with them in cash $591,000. They spent the first winter with the Mennonites in Ontario, then in the spring moved on westward to the Red River valley about thirty miles south of Winnipeg, where they erected simple sod houses. The Canadian government loaned them $100,000, the repayment of which was guaranteed by Ontario Mennonites. The Ontario Mennonites also loaned them a sum of approximately $40,000. The first loan has been altogether repaid while the latter has been almost repaid. Eight townships east of the Red river were reserved for the Mennonites and settled by them, while seventeen townships were settled in like manner west of the

Red river. The settlers in this part of Canada made rapid progress and soon transformed the fruitful Red river valley into prosperous settlements whose wealth increased from year to year. School houses were built in each village, and numerous churches were erected in the settlement.

As has been mentioned above the Canadian settlers were the more conservative portion of the Russian emigrants. The dominion government had also promised by an Order-in-Council that the Mennonites should have full control over their schools. However this promise actually was invalid because constitutionally the control of the schools is reserved to the individual provinces.

However the immigrants thought that they had the right to establish schools according to their own notions. Their teachers for the most part had inadequate training and the instruction was only in the German language. But the provincial government of Manitoba desired that the Mennonites should also learn English, consequently H. H. Ewert, a Mennonite teacher in Kansas, was called to Manitoba to aid in the development of the Mennonite schools. He became the director of a normal school in Gretna and was also appointed by the government as inspector for the Mennonite schools. The consequence of these measures was a determined struggle which ended in a sharp division among the congregations. The portion of the group which supported Ewert was by far the smaller portion, whereas the great majority fought the public elementary schools as much as possible. Slowly but surely progress was made in educational matters, until the World War when great difficulty was occasioned by the decree of the government that all public schools should fly flags. Thereupon many Mennonites returned to private schools. When, soon after this, compulsory school attendance and strict regulations punishing violators of the school regulations were introduced, many Mennonites left Canada and migrated to Mexico and Paraguay where they were offered freedom from military service and the right to control their own schools. About 7,000 left Canada in this movement. Some of those who went to Mexico returned to Canada, and also a small number from Paraguay. Just now a delegation of Mennonites from Mexico is attempting to secure a location for settlement in Quebec or in Alberta. It is quite doubtful however that they will receive the privileges which they desire as a condition of

their return, particularly the privilege of private schools according to their wishes. Moreover latest reports indicate that the Mexican government has moderated its severe measures and it is altogether possible that the Mennonites will soon be able to secure a restoration of their lost privileges in Mexico.

A second very large immigration of Mennonites to Western Canada from Russia occurred in the years 1923 to 1930 when a total of over 21,000 arrived, most of whom had lost all of their possessions. I do not care to discuss this matter at length here since I am to speak on this theme in another address. Most of these later immigrants are making good progress. They do not have a superfluity but they have their daily bread, and they have been greatly helped with clothes which have been sent by the Mennonites of the United States. What they cherish most is that here in Canada they have the privilege of worshipping in peace according to their faith, and are permitted to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. For the sake of their children many have left their native land, and naturally these people are now particularly zealous to rear their children and their youth in our Mennonite faith for the Kingdom of God.

A Summary of the Various Mennonite Groups in Canada

The Mennonites of Western Canada are very much divided, as is the case in Ontario. A total of eight branches can be identified in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Together with the seven groups in Ontario, Canada, is blessed with a total of fifteen major branches, with a number of smaller twigs. A list of the groups with the statistics of membership follows: The figures given include baptized members and non-baptized children.

General Conference of North America	20,856
Mennonite Brethren Church	10,900
Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church	1,466
Defenceless Mennonite Brethren in Christ	1,357
Krimer Mennonite Brethren Church	700
Church of God (Holdeman Group)	1,100
"Kleine Gemeinde"	2,133
"Bergthaler" (Sommerfelder)	14,223

"Old Colony"	3,000
*(Old) Mennonites (2 branches)	15,000
Amish Mennonites (2 branches)	5,000
*Mennonite Brethren in Christ	1,755*
Scattered groups	%4,000
Total	81,500*

Time does not permit me to describe the various groups in detail. I can only emphasize a few of the major points of difference.

1. *The General Conference of Mennonites of North America.* This group practices baptism by pouring, in the church building. Some of the congregations practice feet washing but most of them do not. All of them reject the oath and military service. In general little emphasis is placed on the manner of dress.

2. *The Mennonite Brethren Church.* This group practices baptism by immersion backwards, practices feet-washing, emphasizes conversion and rejects the oath and military service.

3. *The Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church.* On the whole this group is very much like the group above, except that immersion is required of all candidates for membership including those transferring from other Mennonite groups.

4. *Defenseless Mennonite Brethren in Christ* (Bruderthaler). This group practices baptism by pouring, in the stream, but has partially accepted immersion, and in other respects is much like the Mennonite Brethren group. Candidates for membership are required to be re-baptized.

5. *Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church.* This group baptizes by immersion forwards but is otherwise much like the Mennonite Brethren group, except that it emphasizes much more simplicity of clothing and practices.

6. *Church of God* (Holdeman). This group was founded by John Holdeman who visited Manitoba from Ohio. It practices baptism by pouring, in the church building, and teaches that it is not possible to become a member of the church of God without receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost at the hands of a preacher of this group. Holdeman had belonged to the "old" Mennonites in Me-

* The figures cannot be altogether correct. The (Old) Mennonites have no more than 8,000 adherents, whereas the Mennonite Brethren in Christ have at least 3,000. The total should therefore be about 75,000. (H. S. B.)

dina County, Ohio. He organized his church in about 1860 out of a small number of members who had left the old Mennonite group. About 1881 he labored in Manitoba and succeeded in organizing a congregation composed chiefly of members of the "Kleine Gemeinde." Members were won also from other groups. The "Holdeman" people are very energetic in inner mission work and evangelization. They have no foreign mission work. They emphasize non-resistance and rejection of the oath. They practice a very strict discipline, forbid acceptance of worldly offices, and practice feet washing. The men of the church are forbidden to shave the beard and to pay any particular attention to the hair of the head. Holdeman described his own calling as follows: "My calling is to understand the plan of God, to know mysteries, to settle quarrels, to maintain peace, to interpret dreams and visions."

7. *Kleine Gemeinde.* This group was founded by a certain Klaas Reimer in South Russia in the year 1812. The entire group emigrated to America about 1875. It was originally composed of members who left the "Grosse Gemeinde" because they considered it to be too worldly. This group separates itself from everything worldly and holds very faithfully to the ancient customs and practices. However in late years they have accepted many new things, such as Sunday Schools, young people's organizations, and singing classes. Foreign missions are not conducted directly, but Mennonite missionaries are allowed to speak in their churches and to spread information about mission work, and members of the church are allowed to support mission work.

8. *Old Colony Church.* Practically all of this group emigrated to Mexico in 1921 with approximately 6,000 souls. One organized congregation still exists at Hague, Saskatchewan. However, many scattered members were left behind without pastoral care when the main body left. The "Old Colony" group holds tenaciously to the ancient customs and practices. Attendance at Sunday School and Young People's meetings is held to be wrong. Automobiles and telephones are not permitted. Simplicity is emphasized, and conformity to the world is warned against. The group is much like the Kleine Gemeinde but does not forbid smoking and dancing like the other group does.

9. *The Bergthaler (Sommerfelder) Mennonites.* This group separated from the old Bergthaler group in 1892 on account of the

school question; they accepted the teaching of English in the public schools, whereas the old group did not. They also emphasize simplicity, hold to the ancient customs, and are very conservative, although not so strict as the Old Colony and the Kleine Gemeinde. The Old Colony and the Bergthaler (Sommerfelder) groups do not operate their own mission stations, but they do not forbid their members to support mission work.

This concludes our summary of the fifteen branches of the Mennonites in Canada. In all important questions of our confession of faith, such as infant baptism, rejection of military service, and the oath, all agree. The differences lie more in the outward forms.

Military Service

Since 1867 the laws governing military service in Canada have been changed three or four times, but in each case consideration has been given to those who do not feel that they can go to war because of their faith. Our Mennonite people in Canada have always been free from military service. Even in the last world war in which Canada participated from the very beginning, no single Mennonite was compelled to go to war, at least if he was properly cared for by the Mennonite organizations. Since conditions in the world at the present time are quite alarming, I was asked by our conference to inquire of the government regarding its attitude toward military service at the present time. I was told that as long as the Mennonites include non-resistance in their confession of faith, so long will they be granted freedom from military service just as has been the case in the past.

Education

Only a small minority of our Mennonites in Canada are opposed to education, whereas the great majority desires good schools. Two higher schools have been established in the western provinces, one in Gretna, Manitoba, and the other in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. In these schools teachers are trained who are able to teach in the elementary schools after they have passed the state examinations. In recent years the Mennonites of western Canada have suffered very much economically: for this reason we have not been able to

establish colleges. However as soon as prosperity returns our educational system will undoubtedly make further progress.

At the present time the churches of Canada are laying much emphasis on Bible schools. Both in the east and in the west several such schools have been established, with the laudable purpose of developing better workers for the Sunday Schools and for the congregations.

If more advanced training is desired our young people attend the universities of the various provinces. A considerable number have already completed their study at the university, frequently with honor. However, the present hard times have made it difficult for many of them to secure employment in our own communities. As soon as economic conditions improve, our trained young people will find more and more opportunities to employ their talents among our own people. At the present time the elementary schools in our Mennonite settlements are almost exclusively served by Mennonite teachers. Our Mennonite normal schools have a good reputation with the governments of the various provinces.

Care of the Sick and the Aged

Our congregations do their best to provide for the sick. Three or four hospitals have been established under Mennonite management, with Mennonite nurses and in part Mennonite physicians. Recently it has been proposed to establish a Mennonite institution for those mentally ill. In Manitoba there are two Mennonite homes for the aged, one in Gretna and one in Winkler.

In the field of education, the care of sick, and relief work, as well as in the manner of presenting our views to the government, our Mennonites in Canada co-operate. However, in other matters each branch goes its own way.

THE MENNONITES OF PARAGUAY

FRITZ KLIEWER

Fernheim, Paraguay

Because of the expense it has not been possible for the Mennonites of Paraguay to send a representative to the Mennonite World Conference. For this reason I am willing to accept the commission to give a brief report concerning the condition of the Mennonites in Paraguay.

My report will not be a report which goes far back into the past, as has been the case in the addresses which we have just heard, for it deals with the living present. Several thousand Mennonites, who fortunately escaped from the Soviet hell six years ago, are in the process of building for themselves a new home in the heart of primeval Paraguay in the midst of the most difficult circumstances, where they may express their faith and their culture without hindrance. I have been a part of this settlement myself from the very beginning and I know what it means to achieve an economic and spiritual existence in a new land under the most primitive conditions and almost without financial resources.

As has so often been the case in their four hundred years history the Mennonites have also in Paraguay undertaken a tremendous cultural task. The delta of the lower Vistula was drained by them in the sixteenth and seventeenth century by means of dams and canals, and a prosperous garden land was created. In Russia the Mennonites transformed the steppes as far as Siberia and Turkestan and even eastward to the Amur valley into fruitful grain fields. The off-spring of these same Mennonites were pioneers in the settlement of the prairie provinces of Canada in the latter part of the last century, and at present they are pioneering in the development of the Paraguayan Chaco. The Chaco is a territory of about 3,000 square kilometers, more than half as large as all Germany. For thousands of years this portion of the earth has been untouched, inhabited only by some wild Indian tribes until a few years ago when German Mennonites from Canada and Russia came into the Chaco and began to plow their furrows there.

Today there are two large Mennonite colonies in this territory consisting of thirty-eight villages with approximately 4,000 inhabitants. One colony, called "Menno", was founded in 1928 by Mennonites from Canada. They left their native land because of the loss of the school privileges which they had enjoyed, and became pioneers in a colonization project whose significance and ultimate outcome cannot be measured. The settlers who had founded the "Menno" Colony are descendants of West Prussian Mennonites who migrated to Russia at the turn of the eighteenth century and then moved further to Canada in 1874 as the result of the loss of their freedom from military service. "Menno" consists of eighteen villages all laid out on the pattern of the Mennonite villages in Russia. The houses are built on both sides of the street, and in the middle of the village is a school in which the children are taught reading, writing and arithmetic as well as religion. The leadership of the congregations in the colony is in the hands of a bishop who is assisted by several preachers. On Sunday the services are held in the schools, but the colony already has a church building which seats about 500 persons.

In 1930 another colony called "Fernheim" was founded northwest of "Menno" by Russian Mennonites. This colony today consists of nineteen villages. The flight of the German colonists out of Russia in 1929 is still vivid in the memory of all of you. Part of these refugees were brought to Paraguay in 1930. In 1932 another group of 370 persons, who had fled from the Amur region into Manchuria, joined them. Another small group of Mennonite settlers from Poland, to which I also belong, joined the colony the very first year of its establishment.

These Mennonite settlers in the Chaco have undertaken a colonization enterprise under the most difficult conditions, whose success may perhaps open the door to the settlement of thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands of human beings in this region. In the first months of the settlement the unaccustomed climate, shortage of food supplies, hardships and hard work gave rise to sickness which spread rapidly on account of the absence of medical help and took the lives of many. Whole families died out and many widows and orphans were left behind. In "Menno" 180 persons died, more than ten percent of the immigrants; in "Fernheim" 92 persons died or about four percent. In addition to this, rains failed and the

fields could not be planted. In a report from Fernheim concerning conditions at that time, we read the following: "The endurance of the settlers was almost gone. In Moscow the Lord had heard our prayers and had not let us fall into the hands of men. Here we fell into the hands of God. God spoke in terrible earnestness to us. Because of the danger of infection religious services had to be discontinued. Deaths increased so rapidly that coffins and graves had to be made by moonlight. . . . That was a time of bitter testing, a time when we could scarcely understand our Father in heaven any more. But we dared not give up to despair. The strong arm of our God bore us through all the storm of temptation and brought us to rest under His wings. . . ."

Periodical drought which followed, as well as failures in the cultivation of hitherto unknown crops, led to the feeling on the part of many a settler that there was no future in the Chaco. For this reason a strong movement to abandon the settlement developed in 1931 which has not yet altogether died out. In the course of time many families have left the Chaco to seek a better living in eastern Paraguay. At times it seemed as though the entire colony would break up, but ever and again the strong sense of solidarity saved the colony from the danger threatened by the centrifugal forces.

The greatest danger for the colony was the war in the Chaco which broke out in 1932 between Paraguay and Bolivia and which was fought not far from the colony. For months we could hear the roar of the cannon and the rattle of the machine guns and lived in constant danger of being forced to flee. Twice we actually received orders to abandon the colony. But God continued to hold His protecting hand over us and we were permitted to remain. The war brought many difficult experiences so that we almost collapsed at times. Malaria was brought into the colony by the soldiers. More than 90 percent of the population became victims of the epidemic. Even though there were no deaths directly traceable to this disease, yet there were many families in which all the workers were laid up for months.

I could relate many other hindrances and difficulties which placed obstacles in the way of constructive effort in the colony. Let me mention only the inflation, the drought of the past two years, the insect pests, the great distance from the railway, and the difficulty in finding a market. During the time of the war the money inflation

began which has continued to the present time and which has handicapped economic development very much. In addition to this the government has devised a system of control of foreign exchange in the past few years which has robbed the settlers of a large part of the value of the cotton which they sold to foreign markets. And finally last year as the result of the drought the harvest was considerably less than in the preceding year, and in the current year the aphis has wrought considerable damage in the cotton. And from time to time we are threatened by swarms of grasshoppers which are capable of destroying in the course of an hour an entire crop of cotton, which is thus far our only export crop.

For this reason it is quite understandable that the spirits of the settlers have been very much depressed in recent months. Many a father of a family looks into the future with great concern for he does not know how he can care for his children in the coming year. However we do not want to lose courage but work on in trust in God. We sometimes become faint-hearted but we never want to despair. We have the conviction that God has brought us into this new land and has given us who are in Paraguay a commission which we must fulfill. He knows why we are suffering such severe tests, and He will help us to overcome all difficulties.

In spite of all the hindrances which have handicapped our struggle to create a new home in Paraguay, a tremendous work has been accomplished in a short time. Visitors to the colony are amazed when they suddenly reach the neat German villages after a long journey of several days by ox-cart through the primeval forest. In the center of the colony a town, called Philadelphia, has been built in which all the colony enterprises are located. Here is the colony building in which the Oberschulz, who is the responsible leader of the colony, has his office. Here is the saw mill, the oil press, the flour mill, the cotton gin, the co-operative store, the hospital, the printing shop, and the four year middle school. These institutions have all been established by the community as a whole. In the first years of the colony each settler had to give fifty days of labor in the year for the common good. It is only with the aid of such a sense of community solidarity that it will be possible to successfully complete the colonization project which has been begun in the Chaco.

Cultural life in our colony has been very active from the beginning. In the very first year the construction of schools was begun

and today all the children have the privilege of organized instruction in schools. Fernheim possesses sixteen primary schools and one four-year middle school in which our future teachers, bookkeepers, and secretaries are being trained. The church congregations were also organized in the very first days after the arrival and held services ever since, at first in tents, and now in the school buildings. Almost every village has a chorus which takes part in the services. From time to time festivals of various kinds are held in which the entire colony takes part. The great celebration in the colony is the twenty-fifth of November which is celebrated in memory of the wonderful deliverance from Russia. Special emphasis is laid by the congregations on young people's work which is zealously promoted in all the villages.

This ambitious Mennonite community in the Chaco constitutes a continuation of the Mennonitism which was so prosperous in Russia. In Paraguay we have the possibility of continuing the life of our forefathers and giving full expression to our faith. God has also given us tasks which we must fulfill. The Paraguayan government expects from us a great colonizing work; only for this reason has it granted the Mennonites such exceptional privileges. That the government is not disappointed in us is indicated by an official statement in the preface to a booklet entitled, "Las Colonias Mennonitas en el Chaco Paraguayo," which was published by the government in 1934. The preface says, "The Mennonite colonies in the Chaco are a model of the greatest creative power, of iron will, and of an unshakable belief in the blessing of work. Everyone knows who these modest settlers are, who have built their huts in the heart of the Chaco with self denying labor. But not every one knows the magnificence of their achievement. There one can see the hand at the plow drawing furrows as messengers of progress, developing a fruitful land for the economy of our country. Valuable crops are growing in their fields. The publication of this series of essays by government experts will contribute not only to making known the agricultural possibilities of the Chaco but to the appreciation of the achievements of those who have conquered the wilderness with inexhaustible energy. To these sacrificial warriors of peace and labor we dedicate this booklet in grateful recognition."

But the Mennonites have not only been bearers of culture in the land in which they have settled, but they have also been above all

bearers and spreaders of the gospel, for it has been chiefly for the gospel's sake that they have taken the wanderer's staff in hand. In the Chaco God has placed us in the midst of Indians and consequently our congregations feel the responsibility to bring to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. Last year a mission was established among these Indians.

In the hard struggle for existence which we have had to fight out yonder, and in all the great and difficult tasks which face us, again and again we have experienced the love of our brethren throughout the world as well as that of our German motherland. Without the brotherly helping hand it would not have been possible for us to establish a new home and to fulfil the tasks which have been ours. Therefore I conclude my address with the expression of thanks to all those who have supported us in any respect whatsoever, and wish to thank particularly our honored Professor Unruh and the representatives of the Mennonite Central Committee of North America who are here present, for their untiring endeavors on behalf of the settlers in Paraguay.

THE WORLD CONFERENCE*---A DUTCH IMPRESSION

H. C. Leignes Bakhoven
Zeerijp, Netherlands

About six months ago more than three hundred Mennonites came together for the General Congress at Amsterdam. What happened there was of great importance to our brotherhood. It is with great pleasure that I undertake to give a personal impression of the congress; with pleasure, because when I look back upon it, I am still filled with thankfulness. We who were there were able to receive and to learn much. To be sure, not everything tended to make us joyful, and certainly those days brought many problems before us, but that was a good thing too, for we learned to understand more clearly what questions are of importance to our Mennonite brotherhood in our time, and we learned to see better that these questions will be solved only by an earnest united sympathetic effort.

In addition to those present from the Netherlands, there were at this congress many representatives from Germany, the United States of America, Canada, Switzerland, France, and some emigrants from Russia as well as representatives of smaller groups. In some respects this congress was therefore a courageous act. An outsider might think that a congress of Mennonites, who have the reputation of always trying to be in harmony, should, as a matter of course, have a common foundation for fellowship. But he who is better acquainted with the circumstances knew beforehand that here people would come together who, although possessing a common historical tradition because they are all Menno's followers, today have become separated so far from each other that it certainly is a real question whether unity of any sort is possible. And many a one did indeed wonder if it would be possible to bridge over the differences in modes of thought and life.

So the wish which the chairman, Pastor van Drooge, expressed in the speech with which he opened the congress was right: the wish

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that we should emphasize so much the great things which bind us together that the trifles would not be able to separate us. Full of promise was that first evening in the Singel Church in Amsterdam, where Pastor A. K. Kuiper pointed out to us the One Foundation upon which every one must build in his own way. And then, when we Mennonites from so many different countries sang together the Ambrosian hymn of praise, there was no one who was not deeply touched. Yet I felt that the promise of that first meeting was not fulfilled at Amsterdam. Through the personalities of speakers such as Dr. Christian Neff and Professor Benjamin Unruh we were much impressed; and what was discussed and presented there, the lectures about the past and present of the Mennonites in different countries, was enlightening and good. But then, because of the official character of the Amsterdam part of the congress, those lectures were kept so brief and so purely historical, that at the end of it all we felt ourselves more or less as outsiders looking on, and did not really come nearer to each other. That was the reason why many a one left Amsterdam with a feeling of disappointment notwithstanding the many good things which were presented and which we shall keep as precious documents of our history in the extensive reports of the congress. We had not unitedly experienced anything fundamental. We felt very deeply that there were differences separating us, and we would have liked to talk about them in order to learn to know each other better, but that was not possible. Moreover, for reasons which are easy to understand, the German delegates did not express themselves very much. And so we felt a restraint upon us which interfered with that openness toward one another which is the first requirement for real fellowship.

It was Elspeet with its broad moors and beautiful landscapes which brought us to ourselves and to each other. There the lectures dealt more with principles, and everyone was compelled to express himself candidly. There too, in that sincere, brotherly, atmosphere each could reveal himself better and give expression to his real convictions. As a consequence of these frank discussions it became evident that our first fears were justified. The addresses and personal conversations revealed how far we Mennonites had drifted from each other. This was manifested first of all in the field of faith. Most of the foreign brethren were "orthodox," whereas we Hollanders for the greater part had altogether our own type of

faith which the foreigners could not understand. It was not possible to enter into a discussion of the differences in the short time which was available; had we done so, certainly the differences would have manifested themselves still more distinctly. These differences also played a part in the differing formulation of the purpose of our missionary activity. However, it appeared from the discussion that, in general, understanding and interest for mission work is increasing in our brotherhood and many of us were deeply touched by the inspired testimonies from men who are giving themselves to the work of medical missions and evangelization.*

The difference in convictions appeared greatest when we began to discuss the question of our attitude towards culture. Pastor Fritz Kuiper expressed sentiments on this subject which are probably shared by all of us. He said in essence: "The earlier Mennonites kept themselves out of worldly affairs, they wanted to form closed communities; we, however, think differently on this point; we believe that we are placed in this world to work here. As Christians we feel we have a calling in this world, a task in regard to culture. In principle we do not say 'nay' but 'aye' to the concept of a responsibility toward this world. We are aware, to be sure, that at times Mennonites have given themselves so much to this world that they have become worldly and lax and have consequently followed the spirit of this world too much. We know that it is therefore necessary that we should learn to understand our Christian calling better and to condemn everything which, according to our conviction, is contrary to the Gospel. We must be able to understand accordingly that according to their most sacred conviction some people can refuse to enter military service. We dare not let this world go, but neither dare we yield uncritically to this world. The Gospel calls us to be *in* this world and yet not to be *of* this world."

As a result of Kuiper's address and the one on the same topic by Professor Smith, the differences showed themselves in a somewhat alarming way. For the greater part the Americans and the Dutch agreed with Kuiper, only with this difference that generally the Americans seem to be less entangled in the things of this world than the Dutch. The Germans on the other hand took quite a different point of view; they saw in the cultural and political life of today

* Missionary Schmidt from Java, and Missionary Kuhlman from China, gave inspiring testimonies. H. S. B.

something to which Mennonites as Mennonites have nothing to say. In their congregations they would care for their personal religious life, but they had not a single word to say nor a single message on participation in national and cultural affairs. The Gospel was for them only a message for their own welfare, not for this struggling world. They stood altogether outside of the religious conflict in Germany. Sometimes it made us feel both strange and hurt that Mennonites living in a state where dictatorship and world-glorification is exalted, and where human and spiritual liberty is abrogated, should have nothing to say about all this from the point of view of their faith. Militarism, for example, was accepted as a necessity to hold back Bolshevism. Without wishing to judge on this point, I yet want to say that it seemed to us as if the life of the German Mennonite congregations had not escaped the danger of fossilization. On the opposite side of the question were the Americans whose representatives, Bender, Miller, and Schroeder, declared themselves for democracy as a high spiritual possession and who declared positively that ninety-five per cent of the Americans are non-resistant because of their faith. In them we met a type of faith which we Dutch do not know here, a positive faith which holds strongly to the ancient Mennonite principles and which desires to fulfill with them a special task in this world.

Thus a chasm was disclosed in the domain of religious conviction. That sometimes made it very difficult. Yet the differences were not able to estrange us completely from each other, because there was something underlying that I should like to call unity in the deepest sense. In the first place it was a unity in the earnest desire to understand the will of God. For when in the evening after much seeking and speaking and deliberation the sounds died away and we were silent together and every one bowed his head in prayer, then we all felt ourselves one in the sincere desire to listen to the voice of God for a message for our life and our time. That was sincere and in earnest. However great the differences were, we all understood that here things were involved which required honest discussion and in which each had found only a part of the truth. We knew that each sought the will of God with sincerity and intense desire. That will of God was understood in different ways, but the desire was the same. So we perceived again that where men speak there will be variety of opinion and that we must permit this variety if we wish to main-

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tain liberty. But we perceived also that where there is sincerity and humble reverential seeking, there men may yet form a community if human insignificance is silent before God.

That there was unity in the deepest sense also was evident from the patience and conscious tolerance with which the strain due to our differences, which was sometimes very great, was endured. The desire grew to speak more fully and explicitly about the questions under discussion and in this way to learn from each other. Therefore this congress points to the future. After Basel and Danzig it was a new, although a hesitating beginning, but yet a beginning from which something good can emerge if we learn to speak still more sincerely with each other, to listen still more quietly.

There was also unity in the concern about the distress of many Mennonites, a unity which made us forget our differences in the common concern for the lives of those who for the sake of their faith have had to leave their native country, leaving everything behind, and who have lost many relatives and have still to undergo many hardships. We were deeply moved by the thought of those who still have a hard daily struggle for existence and whose letters and testimonies nevertheless speak to us of a religious strength and joy which make us feel ashamed.

A universal respect grew in us when Brother Toews and Brother Hiebert told us so simply and so touchingly about the fate of the colonists in Canada, Paraguay and Brazil, when we saw with our mind's eye how the refugees came to primeval forests and plains and were obliged to build their entire life again from a new beginning. Many of these refugees still have a very hard life, are still struggling to secure an existence for their families and to pay off their debts. And then there are the others who could not flee. Approximately fifty thousand Russian Mennonites who remained behind in Russia are slowly dying out in their own country. Everywhere they live dispersed and have to be silent under persecution.

As we thought of this, we felt very strongly that perhaps in the last analysis the differences between us were not the most important. And in all of us the desire was awakened to be able to do something for those Mennonites who lead such a hard life. Our life is still so easy; they have been faithful unto the very end; cannot we support them by giving something of ourselves? Then it was resolved unanimously that just as was the case after Danzig, a world

collection should be held in order to help pay off the debt of the colonists. It was also resolved to send to the brethren in Russia a message of sympathy and to pray that they might soon be able to occupy the place which they formerly held in our Brotherhood. It was but little that we could do; it may be of practical use when we show actually that the need of our brethren in Paraguay and Brazil is also our need and when we transform our pity into deeds of financial support.

And the best result of this last evening was that every one understood that for the support of the refugees and those still in Russia international co-operation was necessary. The Dutch Mennonite Committee for Emigrants, which met frequently in private sessions with the other relief committees, brought us the information that a fixed center for international contact had at last been established. The information which Pastor Gorter communicated to us was greeted with joy, particularly because Professor Unruh is to be the central figure in the international contact. Thus it will be possible for international contact to continue and to grow in the years between congresses. In this way the congress had a double practical result: a clarification of insight about the problems which concern Mennonites at this time, and the formation of a central point for international contact in relief work.

We learned much at this congress—much that caused us pain, but our horizon has been widened. We as Hollanders especially realized again and again: how comparatively safe and peaceful we are in our country, how little is at stake for us personally. Those outside stand in the midst of the conflicts of our time. The struggle with the powers of this world has compelled them to make decisions. Many have been dragged along with the world, others have held their own. We do not judge them. As a matter of fact we dare not do so because our lives are still so comfortable. But we must be roused from our complacency; may this congress have awakened us and may it have made us feel how great is the responsibility laid upon us. Many times we were ashamed when we heard others confess a faith, so full of courage and joy notwithstanding the most terrible circumstances, for we were thinking of ourselves and our congregations. Many times we trembled when we perceived how some Mennonites in other countries are no longer faithful to their vocation, for again we were thinking of ourselves and our congregations.

I believe that the contact with the others has delivered us from our complacency. Now we know again what important things are at stake in the struggle of our days. Now we know that when our faith retires to a narrow circle it becomes lifeless. It can be kept alive only through contact with and response to reality. We here in Holland have still the opportunity to ask ourselves what our faith requires of us. We are still able to seek in the Gospel not only our refuge, but also our strength and guidance. That was the charge which the congress laid upon us. We must seek more earnestly than before and try to be faithful. That is why the last meeting at Witmarsum meant so much for us all.

It was Professor Unruh who spoke to us about our Menno Simons who was a fugitive on the face of the earth, but who never fled before the face of his God, and Pastor van Drooge added thereto in his closing prayer the petition that God might renew us as of old. Not that everything must become just as it formerly was, not that we have to go back to the old days in every respect, but that we may learn the obedience of Menno, that again we might give our lives to the service of God.

Probably many went home from the congress with an uneasy feeling that the questions which were placed before us there are very difficult and yet must be faced. And the possibility also faced us that we might be asked personally the decisive question. That may make us fearful, yet it was good that we were there. In a certain sense the life of others which was revealed to us in the sessions of the congress brought us to face ourselves. So the congress can mean a promise for the future of our congregations, if in our own circle we hold fast the word of the song which the young people from Friesland sang so strongly and encouragingly at Witmarsum: "Our strength lies in union, hold out your hands to each other, you all who are young and Mennonites," and if also we hold fast to sincerity and come together with the ardent desire to help each other to understand the will of God and to be faithful to His call.